

ST ACTION

THE WORLD'S ONLY DEDICATED
ST GAMES MAGAZINE

REGULARS:

INTERVIEW: MEDIAGENIC
OVER SIX PAGES OF
AWESOME TIPS INCLUDING
MEGA-POKES FOR VIXEN,
SIDEWINDER, THUNDERCATS
AND PLATOON
A CASE FOR CONVERSION,
ARCADE POTENTIAL

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF ST WORLD
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 5 SEPTEMBER 1988
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28 PAGES OF GAMES REVIEWED

NIGHT RAIDER, VIRUS
MICKEY MOUSE,
THE GREAT GIANA SISTERS

ALIEN SYNDROME, BRAINBOX
BETTER DEAD THAN ALIEN
PETER BEARDSLEY'S INT. FOOTBALL
BIONIC COMMANDO, CHUBBY GRISTLE
CORRUPTION, LEGEND OF THE SWORD
WORLD DARTS, FIRE AND FORGET
FOOTBALL MANAGER II, PHANTASM
SIDEARMS, MOONBASE

COMPETITIONS:

20 KONIX SPEEDKINGS
UP FOR GRABS
WIN A SONY GHETTO-BLASTER
WIN A TAMIYA REMOTE-
CONTROL BUGGY

FEATURES

D.I.Y. FOUR-PLAYER JOYSTICK ADAPTOR

DUVAL

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ARCADE ACTION

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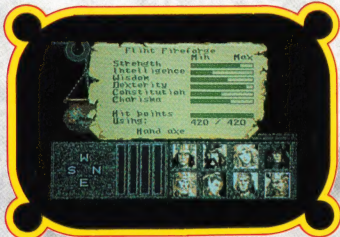
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FANTASY ROLE PLAYING

Located on the northern shore of the Moonsea in the Forgotten Realms, the fabled city of Phlan had been overrun by monsters led by a mysterious leader. Your quest: discover the identity of this evil force.

Pool of Radiance adheres faithfully to the legendary Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[™] fantasy role playing systems. No detail is missed including 6 player characters; computer controlled non-player characters; the Adventurers' Journal packed with history, maps and clues and the Translation Wheel that converts Elvish and Dwarvish writing to English. The gameplay is exhilarating and the graphics state of the art - portrait displays, 3D perspective, tactical combat display and personalised weapons selections compile to form the ultimate breakthrough in fantasy role-playing computer games.



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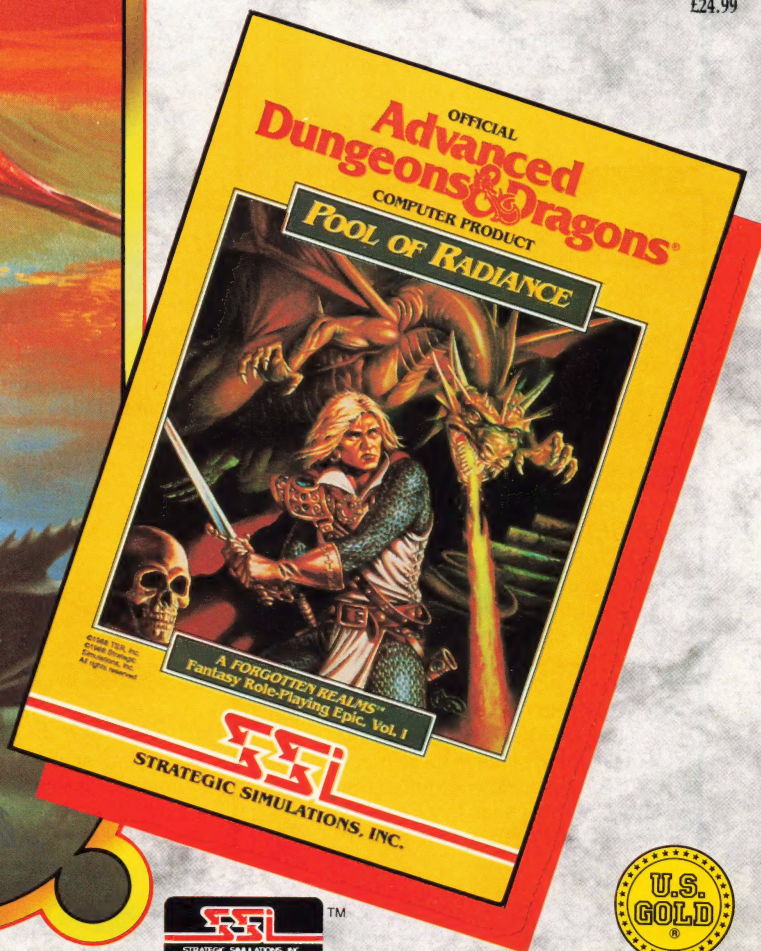
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ACTION PACKED

REVIEWS



VIRUS: "When ST Action contacted me to say that they had Virus, I avoided the office for a fortnight until I discovered that it was the latest release from Firebird!"

58

BDTA: "Although there are many Space Invader clones, the copyright for the original could be difficult to obtain. But that doesn't stop some enterprising companies from getting close to the original concept, but with the addition of a daft scenario."

61

LEGEND OF THE SWORD: "With a fighting force of mutated humanoids at his command, the evil wizard, Suzar, has plunged the Kingdom of Anar into a state of fear. Only a warrior armed with the legendary sword and its accompanying shield have any chance against the hellish hordes. The secret resting place of these magical weapons is now forgotten, but someone must seek them out and unravel the Legend of the Sword."

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FEATURE ARTICLES



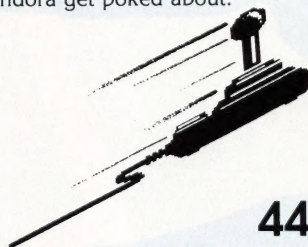
ACTION NEWS: "News items from Titus, Mirrorsoft/FTL, Mandarin, LLama-soft, Logotron, Prism Leisure, Electronic Arts, MicroProse, and U.S. Gold, to name but a few. Also a top ten list of the games reviewed in this issue."

4

CASE FOR CONVERSION: "Dennis Hemmings and Mark Smith this month take a look at Thunderblade, 1943, Operation Wolf and the amazing Afterburner."

32

GIVING THE GAME AWAY: "Sierra Quests, Platoon, Stir Crazy, Pandora and Gauntlet II are amongst Steve Merrett's tips this month. Whilst Thundercats, Vixen, Platoon, Sidewinder and Pandora get poked about."



44

MIRRORSOFT "Mirrorsoft invited representatives from many computer journals to attend the launch of a new software label at the Savoy Hotel in London, Jason Spillër investigated."

12

MEDIAGENIC PROFILE: "Mediagenic is quite a new name in the industry. However, if you say 'Activision', then most people know who you are talking about. Mediagenic is now the corporate name that encompasses Activision, Electric Dreams and many other media companies. Martin Moth visited Mediagenic's offices in Hampstead to meet, among others, Rod Cousens, head of Mediagenic Europe. He reports on his findings."

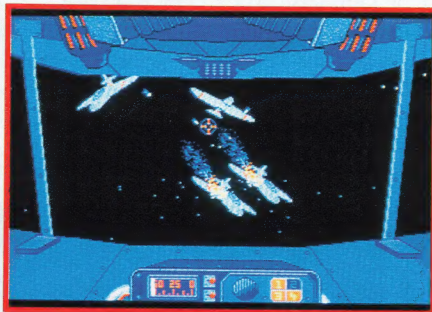
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DIY JOYSTICK ADAPTOR: "An ST Action EXCLUSIVE brought to you straight from Kevin Bulmer and Richard Costello from U.S. Gold, the inventors of the four-joystick adaptor."

16

MORE REVIEWS



NIGHT RAIDER: "How did those clever chaps at Gremlin Graphics manage to squeeze an aircraft simulation in between coin-op conversions? But with a veritable hangar full of air-sims already available, this has to be something a bit special to make an impact."

66

WORLD DARTS: "Computer games are an excellent substitute for driving racing cars, piloting jet fighters and jousting in medieval tournaments - in effect, the sort of experiences, sports and pastimes which would not normally be accessible to the majority of people. But surely it is as easy to play real darts as it is to buy Mastertronic's World Darts?"

70

FIRE AND FORGET: "When everyone was waiting for Out Run, Titus released a game featuring a red sports car, called Crazy Cars. Now Titus have released a game not a million miles from U.S. Gold's next big licence, Roadblasters. Coincidence, or clever marketing?"

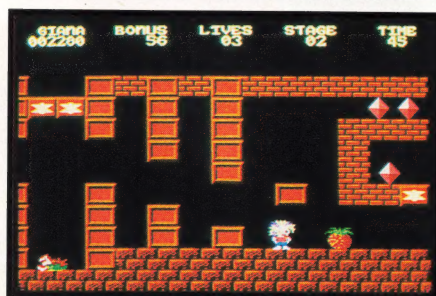
71

BIONIC COMMANDO: "They're lean, mean and ridiculously prolific! There are enough gungho, rapid-firing commandos immortalized in pixels to reconstruct the Normandy landing! Do we need another hero?"

72

GIANA SISTERS: "There are games and there are games. Nearly every arcade game is available on a computer, either in its original form or in an instantly recognizable cloned title. "Super Mario Brothers" was one of the rare exceptions to this rule, until now!"

74



MICKY MOUSE: "Are you ready? 1..2..3..4. Who's the leader of the gang that's made for you and me? M-I-C-K-E-Y, M-O-U-S-E. It was inevitable that during this spate of cartoon licences, Disney's lovable 50-year-old would appear sooner or later."

76



SIDEARMS: "Undoubtedly, the most addictive and playable games were created years ago and so, naturally, these themes often feature strongly in new software. But is revamping and updating these games with new trickery and techniques a justified practice or are we rapidly running out of new ideas?"

78

PHANTASM: "The definition of the word Phantasm is: 'A ghost or spectre'. But, 'Doppelganger' might have been a more relevant title because, in my opinion, it is a ghostly counterpart to the Tau Ceti series of games!"

82

ALIEN SYNDROME: "In space, nobody can hear you scream..." - Ridley Scott's film, Alien, shocked cinema goers everywhere. Drawing heavily on the film's original theme, Sega's Alien Syndrome has been converted for the ST by ACE software. The net result is a game oozing with atmosphere, guts and gore!"

84

CORRUPTION: "Throwing caution to the winds, ST Action hired a Porsche and a Saville Row suit for its ace reporter and sent him to investigate stories of 'corruption' in London's Stock Market."

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WHAT, MORE?

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CREDITS

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ACTION NEWS

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE...



Just when you thought TOS version incompatibility was a thing of the past, Atari have announced a new version.

In beta testing at the moment, this TOS seems set to offer improved file commands, a soft reset using ALT/CTRL/DEL and many more useful improvements for the systems programmer. However, this time I do not think there will be much trouble with incompatibility problems - Atari had enough hassle the last time, I'm sure they do not want any further trouble.

Don't get too worried or frustrated though, this new TOS is only at the beta testing stage and, as such, will take probably another year to reach the shop shelf. Oh, and by the way, please don't pester Atari as they do not have any more information than I have just given you.

TIMES OF LORE

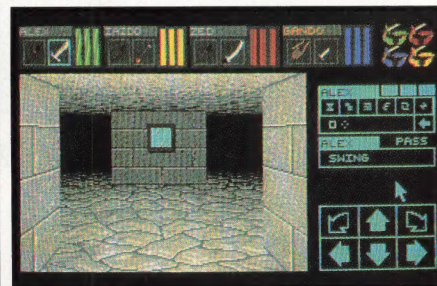
Origin Systems are working on a game for MicroProse that should be available around September called, Times of Lore. A typical fantasy role-playing adventure, you are hired as an 'adventurer', a variant of today's mercenary, and set off around the kingdom of Alboreth. Set in a great land containing towns and villages, an enchanted forest, a desert, Temples and ruined buildings, your task is to perform quests for monks and kings to find your true goal in the game.

DUNGEONS, DUNGEONS AND MORE DUNGEONS!

In a follow-up to their mega-blockbusting success, Dungeon Master, Mirrorsoft are working on two games for the addicted dungeon player. The first one is provisionally entitled Deeper Dungeons, and will contain up to five extra levels in the Dungeon Master theme, as well as a character editor.

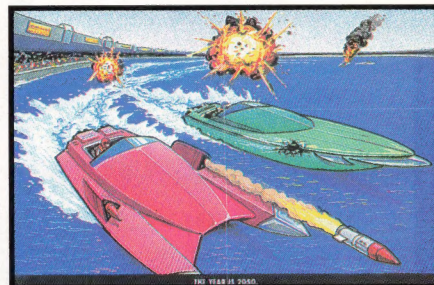
The other will have a science fiction setting but still be based around the DM winning formula. Both games are

under development at the moment with FTL. However, don't expect anything too soon, as FTL work in a timescale all of their own - they had a running version of Dungeon Master at the 1987 PCW show. However, with the undeniable success of DM, they might hurry things up. Then again, they might not... Deeper Dungeons is provisionally set for release in the first week in August - we'll just have to wait and see.



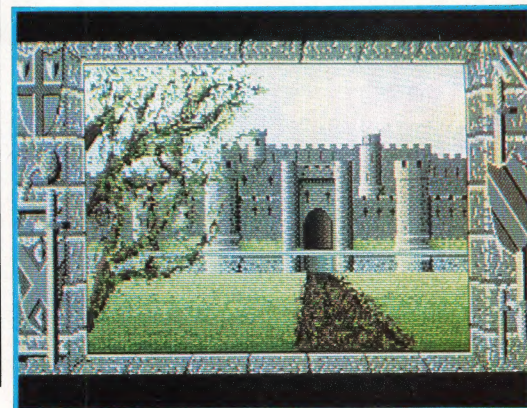
OFFSHORE WARRIOR

Titus are changing tactics and bringing their next game to you from the watery depths of the sea. It will be called Offshore Warrior and in it you control a speedboat in a Mad Max-on-water theme. Rather reminiscent of the old Aqua Racer, it nonetheless promises to have plenty of action packed into it. Will it arrive on a waterproof disk, I wonder?



LANCELOT

Level 9 are working on a graphical adventure set in Arthurian times for Mandarin. The project has been extensively researched to ensure authenticity. The game actually consists of three separate adventures in the one package. It features over 60,000 words of 'cleverly-written and often highly amusing text'. Expect the game out around the first week in September.

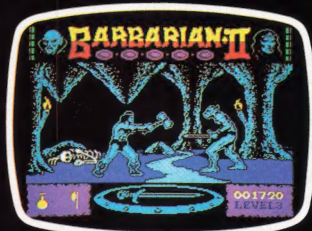


BARBARIAN II

THE DUNGEON OF DRAX



Spectrum Version



Amiga Version



C64 Version



Check your local stockist for availability.
In case of difficulty, available by mail order
from: Palace Software, The Old Forge,
7 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX.
Send cheque or postal order for £9.99

PALACE

(C64, Spectrum, Amstrad cassette), £12.99
(C64 disk), £14.99 (ST, Amstrad, Spectrum
disk), £19.99 (Amiga) plus 80p P&P. Access
and Visa holders telephone 01-278 0751.
Subject to availability.

A HOT SHOT WITH ARTIFICIAL DREAMS?

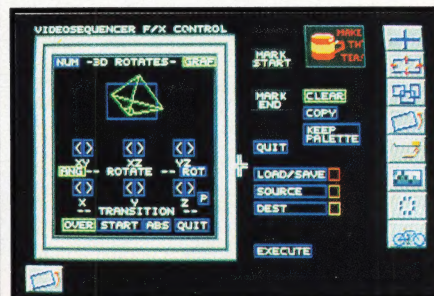
Prism Leisure are putting the finishing touches to two games for the ST. Artificial Dreams will be the first out at the end of July, priced £12.99. Yet another vertical-scroller, this one will appeal because of its budget price. The usual tricks apply, but there are a few novelties included for annoyance. Manoeuvre your craft over certain points on the landscape and either the enemy will speed up to something approaching Warp Factor, or you simply get transported back to the start of the level. If that isn't guaranteed to send you to an early grave, then I don't know what is.

Hot Shot is due for release on the 19th August at £19.99. A bit difficult to explain this game to you, as it takes its theme from Pinball, Breakout and a few other games besides. However, I've played a preview game for a short while and report that the game is quite addictive and the novelty factor (i.e. seeing a game that I haven't already seen under fifteen different guises) is quite refreshing. A two-player game, you play head to head to score as many points as possible in the time allowed. The player you control has a 'graviton gun' that, when the fire button is pressed, causes the gun to emit a gravitational field, so attracting the ball. On letting go, the ball is fired into Breakout-style blocks and Pinball-type flipper arms. The action is certainly fast and furious.



TRIP-A-TRON LETS RIP AT UK ELECTRONICA '88

UK Electronica is Europe's only established one-day Festival for New Age, Synthesizer and Computer Music, having been held over the last five years in the north of England. This year it is moving to St. Johns, a 600-seat concert venue set in Smith Square, Westminster SW1 and will take place on Saturday September 3rd. There, Jeff Minter, of Llamasoft, will present his first live performance of his new Trip-A-Tron light synthesizer.



Jeff has programmed a 50-minute Trip-A-Tron performance to accompany a new album titled 'Merak', by Adrian Wagner, the inventor of the (in)famous Wasp synthesizer. Wagner performs mainly on an ST using a powerful sampling package called ADAP. While Wagner supplies the sound, Jeff will control no fewer than FIVE STs, projecting their images onto a huge video screen.

Doors open at 1pm. For those of you who want more info on the event, phone 01-885 5665. Tickets for the afternoon cost £5, those for the evening cost £7, both together cost £10. Available from the Box Office at St. Johns (Tel: 01-222 1061).

INTERPLAY JOIN EA

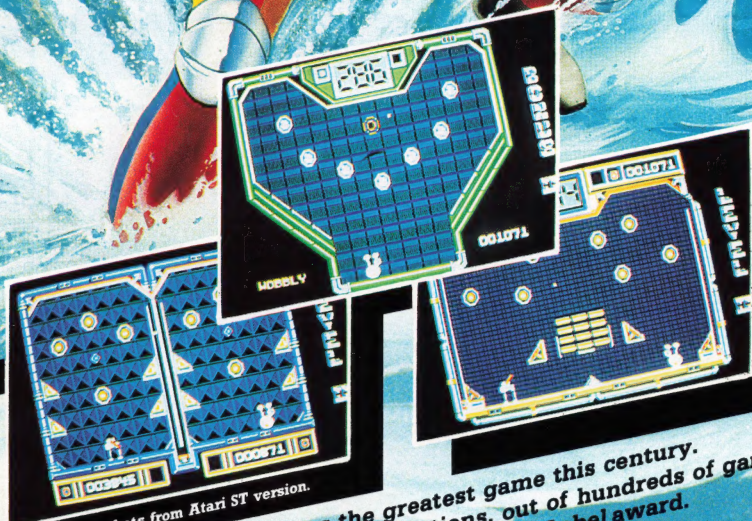
Electronic Arts have signed Interplay, best known for creating The Bard's Tale, as a licence for Europe. Interplay, formerly just a software developer, have become an independent software publisher for their own products and have given EA the exclusive licence for its products in Europe. Interplay's plans call for a minimum of 4 to 7 original products a year, the first two being Battle Chess, a game combining the strategy of chess with combat action, and a new fantasy role-playing game, Neuromancer, based on the Hugo and Nebula award-winning novel by William Gibson, and developed in conjunction with Timothy Leary.

Are You Good Enough to TACKLE

STAR BUY

There is so much in Hot Shot - you need to be a crackshot, a pinball wizard and an ace controller. Have you got what it takes to beat Hot Shot?

GOLD LABEL AWARD



Screen shots from Atari ST version.



Universally acclaimed as the greatest game this century. Hot Shot has exceeded all expectations. out of hundreds of games only two have qualified for Addictives Gold Label award. These are Football Manager 2 and Hot Shot. Hot Shot is so action-packed, before you buy, read the back of the Hot Shot box. Available at all quality stores.

"A fast, addictive challenge. Original and humorous." Games Machine

"It looks frabjuous ... and well brill it looks too." Sinclair User.

Street Date: End of August.

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Spectrum - £8.99 cassette, +3 £12.99 disk

Amstrad - £9.99 cassette £12.99 disk

Amiga - £19.99 Atari ST - £19.99

IBM PC - £19.99

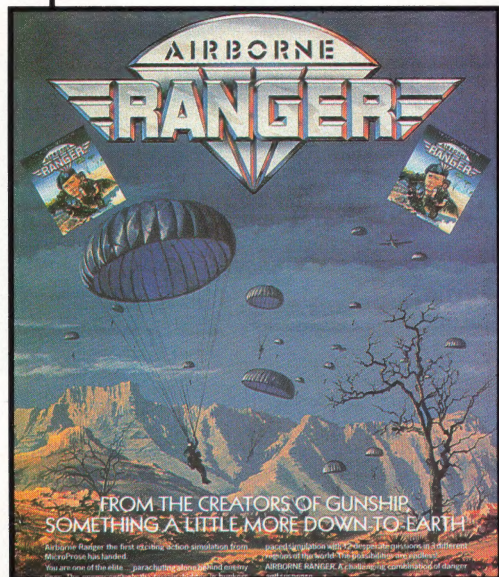
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Go For Gold..It's Totally Addictive

PRISM LEISURE CORPORATION, Unit 1, Baird Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 1SJ.

AIRBORNE RANGER

Another from MicroProse to see the light of day on the ST this Autumn will be Airborne Ranger. You are one of the elite who drop behind enemy lines and then attempt to battle it out against overwhelming odds. The usual gung-ho scenarios apply and you are faced with twelve missions in three different regions of the world.



**"ALPHA 41, YOU ARE
CLEAR TO LAND"**

MicroProse is soon to be releasing Kennedy Approach for the ST. An Air Traffic Control simulator, it incorporates the qualities that we have come to expect from MicroProse: excellent



playability, good graphics and attention to detail second to none, and the usual comprehensive manual.

Take control of flights as they head for any of the five airports. Avoiding bad weather, allowing for low fuel levels, in-flight emergencies, instrument failure and other variables all conspire to keep you busy in ATC. Up to twenty planes, ranging from Concorde to light aircraft, can call on you at any one time, so be prepared for some anxious moments. Retailing at £24.95, the game will be available around August.

GARY LINEKER'S BENEFIT GAMES

Gremlin are releasing TWO Gary Lineker football games in as many months. First on the schedule is GL's Super Skills. This game involves your training to become a top-notch football star. With barely enough time for that

game to digest, Gary Lineker's Hot Shots will be force-fed to you. No details on this one at present, except for the obvious one (No, don't! Ed.) Yep, you can safely assume it has something to do with football. (Too late. Ed.)

DATABYTE

Databyte are having the master copy of their Ice Hockey game flown over from the States as I write this. It's a Mindscape production and Databyte have yet to see what the game looks like, let alone see a playable version. What state it arrives in is anyone's guess. It might make it for this issue, but more probably look for it in the October issue.

They also have two more games in the offing. Indoor Sports and Break-In. No details as to what sports are included in the former, but the latter is a strategy arcade game roughly based on the Iranian Embassy siege, and you must somehow enter the building and deal with its occupants. This one is due for release in September.

CRL

I, Ludicrus, the cartoon-like game where you get thrown to the lions, is set for release end of July/ beginning of August. CRL are also releasing ST Sprite Factory 'sometime in July'.

OCEAN

'Soon!' is all they keep saying. I think they've got an answerphone with a pre-recorded message.

LOGOTRON SET FOR ATTACK ON ST MARKET

Sargon III might just make it into this issue, but on the other hand it might not, so here's a bit of blurb about it. As you can probably tell by the name it's a chess program, 'one of the most sophisticated ever developed in the US' if we are to take the press release at its word. However, to its credit, it has won the PC World Magazine Microcomputer Chess Tournament and, in field trials, has beaten its main rival, Chessmaster 2000.

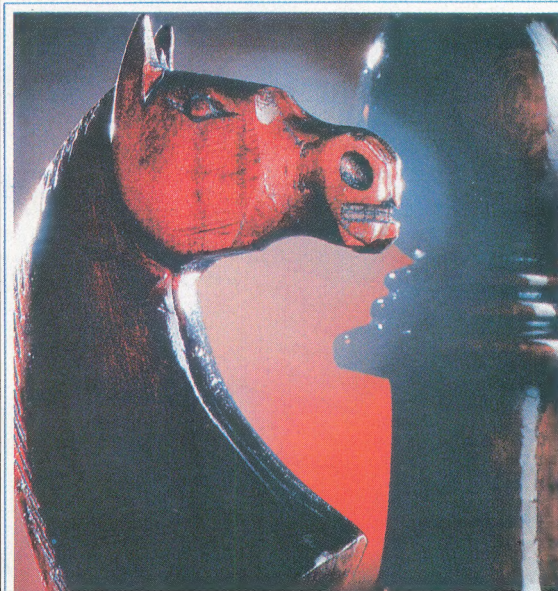
Sargon III contains libraries of over 68,000 opening moves and 107 classic games. It will be available by the time you read this for £24.95

Second on the list from Logotron is Star Goose. Programmed by Steve Cain and Kenny Everett (previous Cain and Everett offerings have been Star Trek and Black Lamp) the game puts you in charge of a highly versatile ground-skimming attack vehicle. Your task is to take on and defeat a myriad of defence forces in the 3D terrain and tunnels of the world of Nom. Basically a shoot-'em-up, we will have to wait and see whether the skills of Messrs Cain and Everett can breathe some life into this old formula. Available in August, price £19.95.

Finally, for the moment, comes StarRay, a horizontally-scrolling (with parallax) shoot-'em-up with 'vicious' gameplay and graphics of 'astounding impact'. Obviously not content with writing most of the vertical-scrollers, Steve Bak is now making a serious effort to monopolize the sideways-moving market. Steve is doing the ST conversion from the Amiga original. Planned date for release is September at a cost of £24.95.

One that has been mentioned is Eye of Horus. No details at present but I'll update you soon enough.

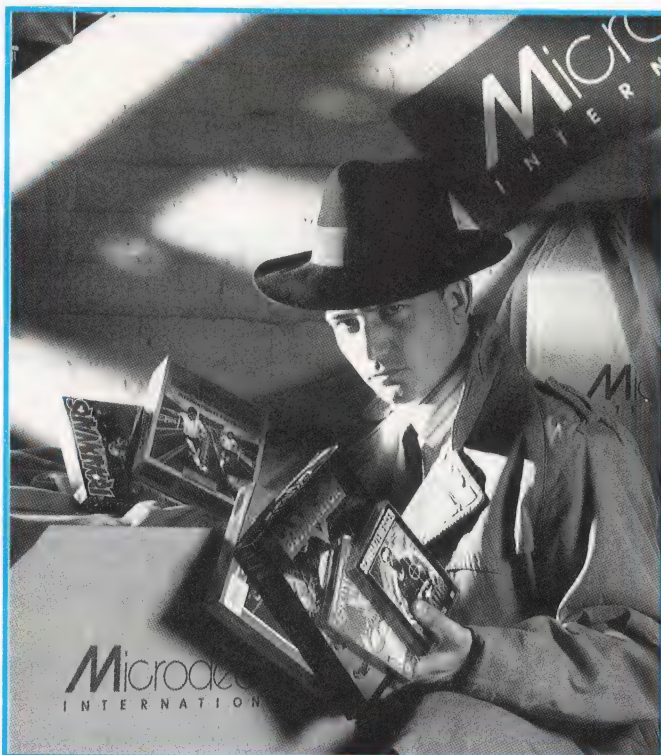
SARGON III



THE GREAT MICRODEALER COVER-UP

One of the leading distributors in the UK, Microdealer, has announced the launch of The Great Microdealer Cover Up. From mid-July, consumers of software from Microdealer-supported stores will obtain one Cover Up token for every £5 spent. These stickers will then be collected on a card similar to the Shell petrol-token promotion. On completion of the card, the consumer will then have a choice of free gifts in the Microdealer catalogue. Also, all entries will go into the Grand Cover Up competition later in the year.

Another first for Microdealer is the fact that they are to become the first distributor in entertainment software to market T-shirts to the consumer. The reasoning behind this masterly plan was that at every PCW Show, T-shirts and Sweatshirts from the big software companies were treated like gold-dust and there became a raging market for them. So now Lee Ginty, boss of Microdealer, has agreements signed with a number of the UK's leading software publishers enabling him to use their software promotional designs on T-shirts. He commented: 'Some of the logos and product artwork are excellent and naturally lend themselves to T-shirt design. We're planning to have a number of designs ready by July'.



LORICIELS

Loriciels are working on the UK version of Space Racer, a bike-racing game set in the future. I played the French version

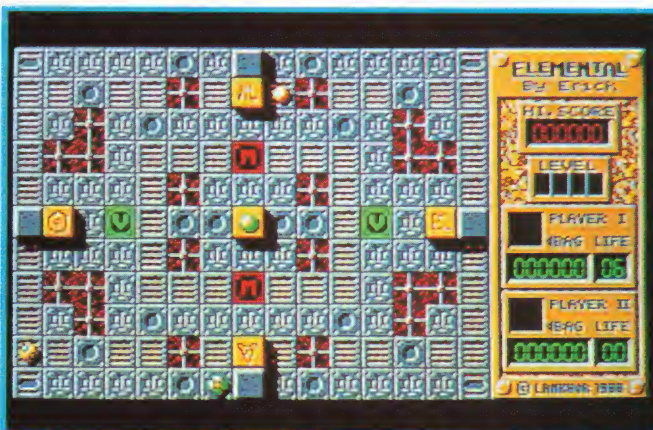


and I've told Niki Penny of Loriciels that the controls, like those of Mach III, are the wrong way round, i.e. in Space Racer, you must push forward on the joystick to go UP! Now maybe it's because I'm an ex-flyer (and don't we know it! ED.), but that seems the wrong way round to me. Any of you out there agree with me? If so, write in and tell me. I'm interested.

Anyway, enough of that. Loriciels plan to bring out three or four games between now and Christmas. Space Racer will be one, but that's all the details I can get, except, one will be released at the PC Show, one at Christmas, and one or two in between. As an aside, Loriciels SA of France are sponsoring a rather nifty little Porsche 944 of Rene Metge, organiser of the Paris-Dakar rally.

TRIO FROM LANKHOR

Lankhor, who brought you Mortville Manor and Killdozers, are soon to be releasing three more games. Elemental is an arcade adventure where you must try and overcome the four natural elements - sounds like coping with a typical British summer! G'nus is an arcade adventure with cartoon-like graphics. The task here is to out-manoeuvre robots, falling walls and other objects out to destroy you. Finally, Vroom, as you might have guessed, is a racing car simulation. From the shots provided, all seem to have good graphics - let's hope the games play as good as they look. All priced at £19.95, they will be available around August and September.



ELITE

Three from Elite will be available in the middle of July, these being Bombjack, Wanderer and Overlander. Bombjack being the old arcade licence and Wanderer being a space game incorporating wire-frame 3D images requiring those hideously stylish cardboard goggles with green and red lenses. Overlander takes on the Mad Max theme and the game revolves around you racing, carrying cargo and improving



your car's performance. Paperboy is scheduled for release at the end of August - not bad considering the last time Elite mentioned Paperboy to me, it concerned a release date of the end of May... Ghosts and Goblins is being worked on for 'the end of the year'.

ROADBLASTERS

Set in the future, Roadblasters puts you behind the wheel of what can only be described as a Formula One car with guns strapped on for FUN! U.S. Gold are working on the conversion



from Atari's arcade hit of the same name. Start off with laser cannon, but attempt to collect cruise missiles, a Nitro-injector and an electronic shield. Replenish your ever-dwindling fuel stocks by picking up red and green fuel globes as you drive. Enemy vehicles, mines, obstacles and roadside gun turrets all conspire to stop you reaching the next level. Expect it to be released around the end of September at £19.99.

NOVAGEN

Yes, they've actually done it. Novagen have given me a piece of news other than, 'it's getting there slowly'. Bruce has revealed that Novagen have recruited another programmer to its rank, i.e. Paul Woakes. The new guy's name is Donovan Prince (no, he's not a pop star) and he's working on (would you believe it?) a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up. Other than this blinding bit of news (only tongue-in-cheek, Bruce - you know me), Novagen are set to be at this year's PC Show with yet another demo of Damocles! Some things never change...

PSYGNOSIS

Psygnosis will be releasing two games in the near future. Menace is coming out on a new, Psychapse label sometime in September, probably in time for the PC Show, and Chrono-

Quest will be out in August. No details at present so read next month's news.

PLAYERS

The sequel to Joe Blade, entitled Joe Blade II (surprised?) will be out around end of August/ beginning of September. Players are also working on licencing products from Germany.



TELECOMSOFT

Elite is scheduled for release on 29 September and is said to feature solid 3D graphics.

ST ACTIONS SCORING SYSTEM

The elusive feature all about the ST Action scoring system has been postponed once again, and the reason for this - we're tweaking it up to make it even more accurate and informative, subtle but worthwhile changes. Next month, hopefully, we will reveal all.

HERE ARE THE TEN TOP SCORING GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE OF ST ACTION:

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1= Night Raider | Gremlin | 78% |
| 1= Mickey Mouse | Gremlin | 78% |
| 3 Gt. Giana Sisters | Go! | 77% |
| 4 Virus | Firebird | 75% |
| 5 Alien Syndrome | ACE | 69% |
| 6 Bionic Commando | Go! | 67% |
| 7 Side Arms | Go! | 61% |
| 8 Phantasm | Exocet | 60% |
| 9= Brainbox | CRL | 58% |
| 9= Fire and Forget | Titus | 58% |

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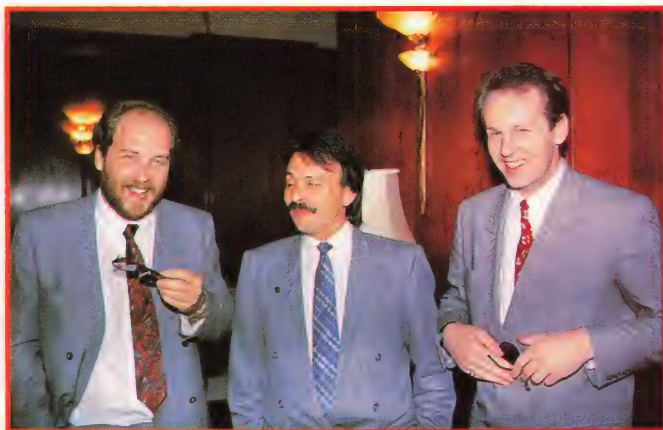
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ACTION NEWS SPECIAL REPORT: MIRRORSOFT LAUNCH

Mirrorsoft invited representatives from many computer journals to attend the launch of a new software label at the Savoy Hotel in London. Peter Bilotta, Mirrorsoft's managing director: 'The entertainment software market is advancing at a rapid pace and consumer requirements are becoming even greater and more sophisticated. To meet these requirements, we believe it is time to introduce a new label which is equipped to deal with the latest advances and developments in software. It is called ImageWorks and it will stand for quality and originality in game design and visual and sound quality.' Bilotta, who was previously Financial Director at Activision, emphasized the importance of the new label: 'We believe that ImageWorks is the most exciting development in the industry this



TOM WATSON, PETER BILOTTA AND GARY MAY

year and we intend it to be a brand leader.'

Mirrorsoft already have five subsidiary companies which develop and publish their own individual style of games. These include, Cinemaware, PSS, FTL, Mindscape and Spectrum Holobyte. Will ImageWorks develop a certain type of software? 'Our intention is to use this label to experiment in a variety of themes rather than one specific area. But it is important that the consumer can rely on us for consistent quality as well as originality and variety.' Did the other labels fail to do this? 'The other labels are known for certain themes, such as PSS with war strategies. But our intention is that ImageWorks will develop original software which cannot easily be categorized.' Bilotta commented on the inevitable demise of the eight-bit market. 'ImageWorks will cater for both eight and sixteen-bit machines, but we shall be constantly monitoring any changes in the market.'

There is an experienced and determined team behind ImageWorks. Marketing Manager, Tom Watson, drew on his experiences at Telecomsoft and directed an intense market research programme. 'We interviewed end users of all ages to find out what they wanted and their comments and requirements have had a great influence on the games that we are going to develop.' Operations Manager, Gary Mays's experience in the industry is exemplary and it is his task, along with Development Manager, John Cook, to direct and control software development: 'The fact that we actually have software immediately ready for the launch of the label is quite unique and we intend to publish a minimum of eighteen games in the first year of trading. Initially, there are six games available for the ST, but we have already commissioned our programmers with new projects.'

ImageWorks boast a wealth of programming talent and they were pleased to announce the signing of one of the most sought-after programming teams, The Bitmap Brothers. After the success of Xenon, the Bitmaps were made several offers and were in the process

of signing a deal with 'a rival company', when ImageWorks made a more attractive offer. The Bitmaps' latest production is called Speedball, which is billed as a game of the future.

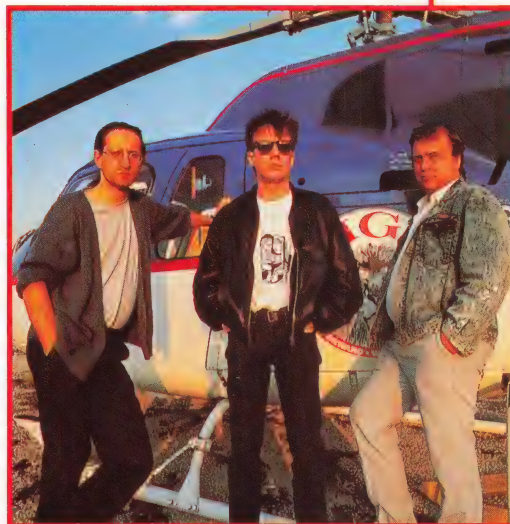
Combining soccer and rollerball with two teams vying for possession of a steel ball, this game is high on violence and joystick-wrenching action, but low on rules and etiquette. You are presented with an overhead-view of the pitch and the steel ball emerges from a hole in the centre. The nearest player to the ball is in your control and you must advance up the pitch, barge your way through the defences and aim for goal. Gratuitous violence plays a big part in this game, and collecting tokens on the pitch endows the player with faster movement and more powerful weaponry to blast the opposition off the field. In anticipation of another success, a number of American companies have approached ImageWorks for the copyrights to Speedball, but nothing has been finalized.

Other programmers of note who are now working exclusively for ImageWorks are Tony Crowther and David Bishop. Tony Crowther is one of the most experienced programmers in Britain and has written many best-selling games, such as Locomotive and Suicide Express. He has teamed up with David Bishop and has been working on a series of six new products for ImageWorks, two of which were on show at the launch. Fernandez Must Die, is an all-action military combat game in which you must defeat a coup perpetrated by General Fernandez. In order to get a chance to assassinate this evil despot, you must combat a full military force who attack on the ground and in the air. There are hundreds of prisoners to liberate, armories to raid and gold to recover. But your ultimate task is to assassinate Fernandez. Another Crowther/Bishop production, Bomboozle, contains some ingenious touches from some of our most eminent programmers, including Minter, Ubik and Jon Ritman. Bomboozle is a relatively simplistic game in which you must direct a strange alien character around a series of increasingly complex screens and locate and detonate bombs and mines. The screen comprises platforms which are drawn in 3D isometric projection, although you can choose to play the game from an overhead perspective.

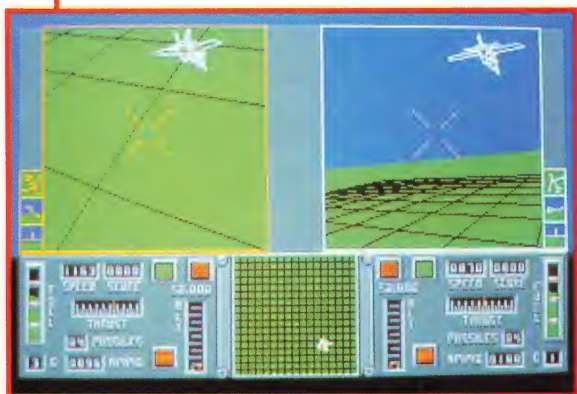
Meanwhile, Adrian Stephens has been working on a game, which ImageWorks reckon will do no less than astound the world. Its working title is Mainframe and although it is at a very early stage of development, ImageWorks were confident that even in its current state, it would impress us. The demonstration illustrated the excellent programming technique which makes solid graphic, multi-face objects move smoothly and speedily. Little is known about the finished product, but they reckon it will be an air simulation with the most realistic feeling of flight. Currently, graphic artists, musicians and game designers are hard at work creating this expected show-stopper.

A young software house called Maxis are developing an incredible military aircraft simulation called Sky Chase. The game is influenced by Air Force flight-school training competitions and emphasis is on two-player combat. This is assisted by a screen which is split vertically in two, and as the combat takes place, each player can see the opponent's plane on his screen. The three-dimensional, vector-graphic planes hurtle across the sky and over an undulating terrain at a terrific pace and, in my opinion, this is going to be the one to look out for. Finally, ImageWorks announced that they were to undertake a coin-op conversion and that a major licensing deal with Atari Games for Blasteroids had been agreed. Peter Bilotta commented on the deal: 'We have been keen to break into the coin-op conversion arena for some time, but it was important to select a game that would suit us. Blasteroids fits the bill perfectly!' Finally, after the phenomenal success of Tetris, will ImageWorks market other games from Russia? Maybe, wait and see! ST Action looks forward to further developments from ImageWorks.

STA



THE BITMAP BROTHERS



Sky Chase

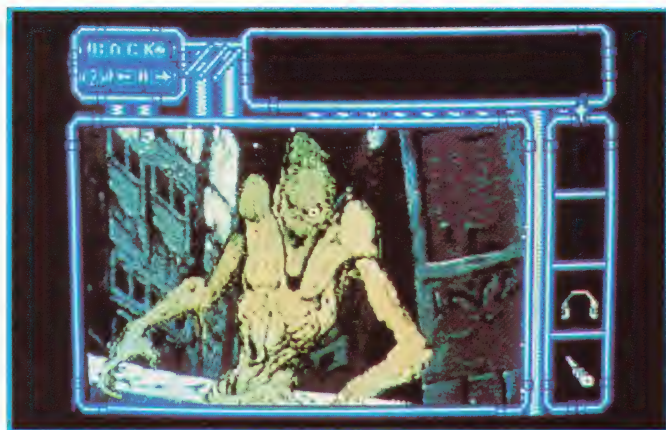
ACTION NEWS SPECIAL REPORT: UBI SOFT

Representatives of the European computer press travelled by land, air and sea to Rennes in Brittany, after receiving an intriguing and irresistible invitation from UBI Soft: 'Come and stay at our beautiful chateau for the weekend.' This attractive request worked perfectly as contingents from Denmark, Spain, Germany, France and Britain punctually congregated at the UBI chateau. Set in 700 acres of beautiful Brittany countryside, the chateau was once inhabited by



members of the French aristocracy and one could almost envisage those extravagantly-dressed characters walking in the grounds, punting on the lake or enjoying opulent balls and banquets in the grand rooms. Today, these same rooms are now the working place and living quarters of UBI's in-house software developers and in these idyllic surroundings, the programmers have achieved remarkable productivity this year.

But in an industry which relies on communication, surely this beautiful but remote country setting has its disadvantages? Founder and President of UBI Soft, Yves Guillemot: 'Our main headquarters are in the centre of Paris and so we manage to stay in touch with developments in the market from there. But with a telephone, modem and Facsimile, it is not really necessary to be in the city.' UBI Soft was established in 1986 as an independent publishing company within the Guillemot group, which is reputed to be the top software distributor in France. The first title to be released was an icon-activated adventure game called *Zombi*, which was described as: 'The most innovative and original adventure of the year!' (Amtrix, Christmas 1986). Since then, UBI have released more than twenty successful titles which have made them one of the top-selling



Final Command

software houses in Europe. Today, UBI have 250 in-house and independent software developers working for them and productivity is booming and the main objective of the weekend was to see the results of this unusual set-up.

After lunch at the Chateau de la Bourdanais, we returned to the UBI's chateau to view seven games which are in various stages of development. After eighteen months of painstaking artwork, *Iron Lord* is finally ready for release. UBI have been criticized for being self-indulgent with this graphical extravaganza, but the general impression at the chateau was very favourable, and what I saw on screen was nothing short of spectacular. Set in the age of chivalry, this graphical adventure combines breathtaking screens with playable arcade action, including archery, arm wrestling and the first 3D sword fighting sequences. In complete contrast to *Iron Lord*, *Puffy's Saga* is a highly amusing game which has been designed with

the younger game player in mind. The game has some hilarious speech synthesis, as the endearing Puffy makes cute comments which reflect the particular predicament he is in. There are 140 levels containing some ingenious features and the challenge and difficulty in this Gauntlet-style game has not been sacrificed for the lighthearted approach.

Yves Guillemot enthusiastically demonstrated a game called *Final Command* in which you must pilot a space shuttle and retrieve some data banks from a destroyed space station. 'The aim, of course, is to survive. But the data banks must be located and returned safely to the space confederation in order to complete the game.' There are fifty individual screens in *Final Command* and emphasis has been placed on adventure and strategy in this rather involved game. However, the game is very playable, thanks to an ingenious icon system. Described as: 'The game of the future', *Skateball* is an unusual combination of soccer with the gratuitous violence of Rollerball, which is played on an ice-hockey rink. You can play against a tenacious and violent computer-controlled team or an opponent on a number of hazardous rinks which are fraught with cracks and pits in the ice. Four goals must be scored in order to move on to the next rink and bonus points are awarded for barging, kicking

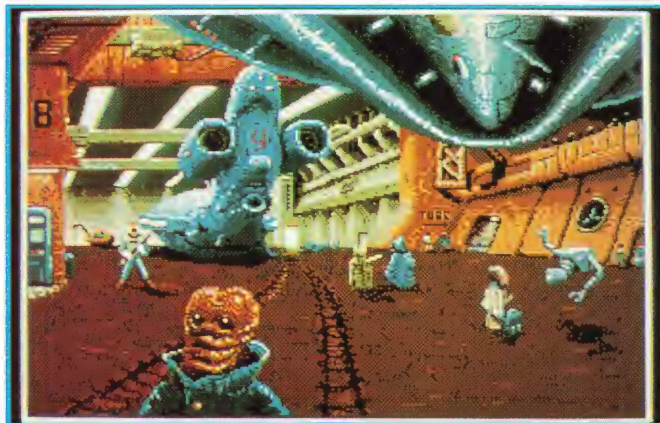


Iron Lord

and knocking the opposition off their feet.

Waiters plied us with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres as we moved from room to room to view the software. You've read Bram Stoker's classic novel, seen countless movies, and now you can play the game. *Dracula* is a terrific arcade game with some ingenious features, starring the nocturnal blood-sucker himself. The infamous vampire's arch enemy, Dr. Van Helsing, has taken the Talisman away from Dracula so that he cannot take over the earth and turn everyone into the living dead. Taking control of Dracula, you must defeat Van Helsing's crack team of vampire hunters and locate the Talisman. You can always count on the Count to come up with some surprises as he changes from bat to wolf and, in his human form, he can collect objects, enter buildings and chew on his victim's neck. The game contains 100 different screens and five levels of blood-curdling fun. After playing the game for ten minutes, I kept expecting to see Christopher Lee strangling a waiter in some dark recess of the chateau. The remainder of the software was a long way from completion and UBI were unwilling to disclose the final contents of the games at this early stage. These include *Fer et Flamme* and *Bat*, which are expected to be available for the ST next spring.

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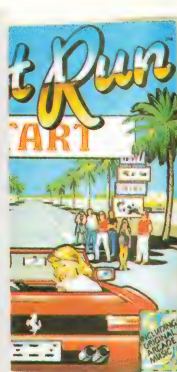
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4STIX

FOUR PLAYER JOYSTICK

I • N • T • E • R • F • A • C • E

U.S. Gold's four-player adaptor for Gauntlet II (£5.99 retail from U.S. Gold) also works with Microdeal's Leatherneck, in an ST Action exclusive, brought to you by Kevin Bulmer and Richard Costello from US Gold, the inventors of the four - joystick adaptor, we show you how to make your own for only £3.99.

An ST Action **EXCLUSIVE** brought to you straight from Kevin Bulmer and Richard Costello from U.S. Gold, the inventors of the four-joystick adaptor.

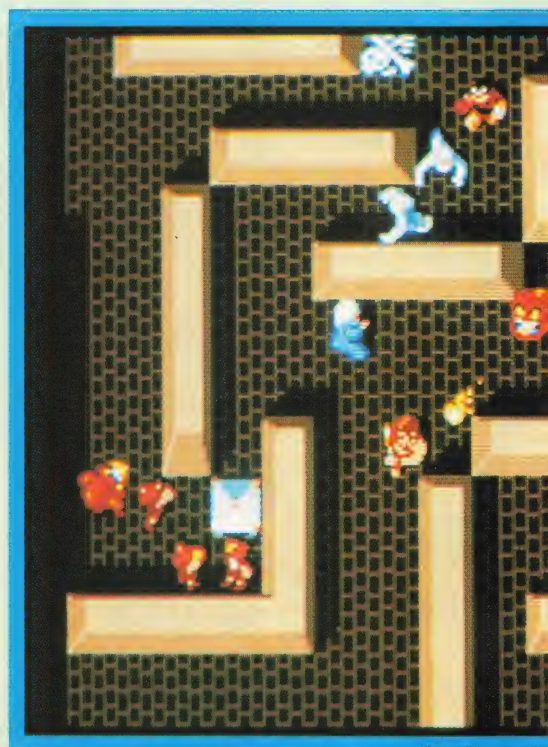
Now that you've bought Gauntlet II (if you haven't bought it yet, go and buy it) you probably want to try a four-player game. Assuming you have enough friends and joysticks, there are two ways to do this: buy an adaptor from U.S. Gold for £5.99 OR read this article and **MAKE YOUR OWN!** It really is quite simple for anyone with a soldering iron and it works out a lot cheaper than buying the real thing.

Listed below are all the components you will need along with their cost. Although all the parts are listed, the plastic hoods for the plugs are optional. ST Action sourced these parts through Link Line Ltd. in Portsmouth, and Link Line have kindly agreed to a special package for ST Action readers wishing to make their own adaptor. The whole kit, including postage and packing, will set you back just £3.30. See their address at the bottom of the article for further details.

You should ultimately have a 25-pin male D-type plug to fit in the printer port of your ST with two cables running off it which end in two male D-type 9-pin plugs onto which you attach your joysticks. Gauntlet II

owners will have noticed that running the game with a printer connected to its port, results in the green elf always appearing at the start of the game! The solution is quite simple - unplug the printer. As you may have guessed, the presence of the printer makes the program think that the fire button on joystick four is pressed. We have received calls from people without printers who have also experienced the problem. We think this must be due to faulty printer ports.

Gauntlet II runs on all models of ST from the oldest to the newest and on all types of drive. It should be pointed out that the loader is intelligent and makes maximum use of available memory, loading extra music and animation if you have a double-sided drive. Don't worry though, as all of the game and speech is available to all systems.



STA

If enough people are interested, we could be persuaded to explain how to make use of the adaptor in your own programs. Write to those nice folks at ST Action if you would like more information.

P • A • R • T • S

- 1 x 25-pin male D-type plug
- 2 x 9-pin male D-type plugs
- 1 metre multi-core (minimum 6-core) cable
- 1 x 25-pin D-type plastic hood (optional)
- 2 x 9-pin D-type plastic hoods (optional)

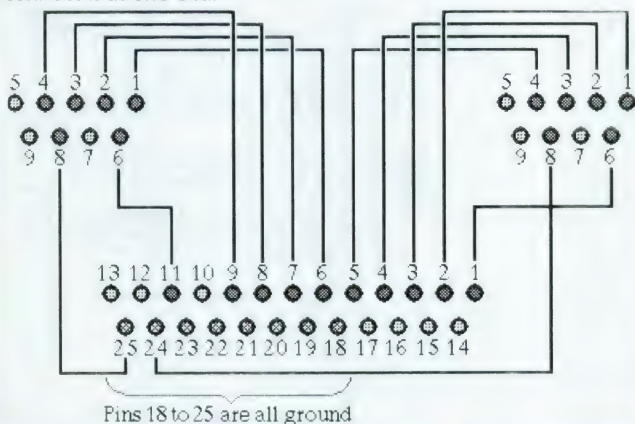
Link Line will supply the above at a cost of £3.30 including postage and packing. Please send a cheque/ Postal Order made payable to Link Line Ltd to:

ST Action offer
Link Line (Portsmouth) Ltd.
Cator House
Somers Road North
Portsmouth
Hants
PO1 1PN

By the way, Link Line do a comprehensive catalogue of cables, connectors and switching units, so drop them a line if you need anything.

4STIX

(1) Decide on a colour code, note it down and **STICK TO IT!** This all depends upon what cable you end up with, so it's up to you. The plugs have small pin numbers from the back and these are what the circuit diagram refers to so you can write your colour code on the circuit diagram. Strip the cable using strippers - not your teeth! Twist the wire ends, tin them by flowing solder over them. Do this to all four ends of the cable, and tin the pins you need on the three plugs. If your cable is screened, twist and tin that too, but only connect it at one end.

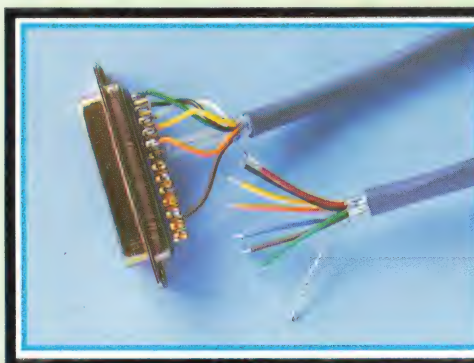


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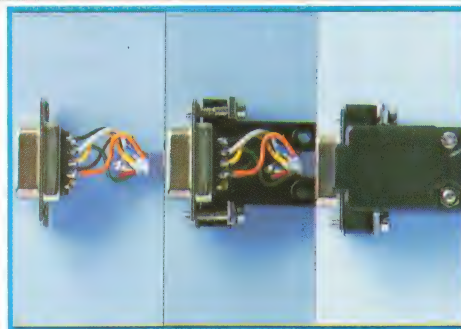
(2) Have both parts of the join tinned, and solder it together without holding the soldering iron on so long that everything melts. Continue according to the circuit diagram and your colour code.



(3) Do all of one plug, then all of another, it's easier that way. The 25-way is tricky, as it needs two cables attaching to it. Pins 18 to 25 are all grounded, so if you have screened cable, solder the ground onto one of these, and leave it unconnected at the 9-pin ends.



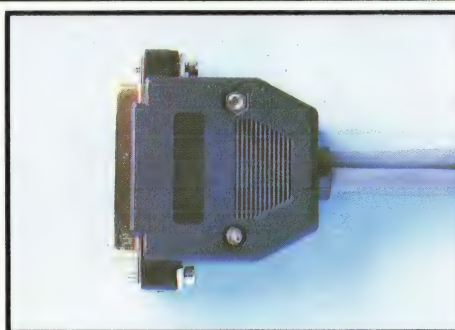
(4) This is how to put the plug together. Put the cable clamp on, one screw faces opposite the other. Then rest this lot in one half of the cover, put the locking screws through those angled bits of metal and rest them in place, as in the photo, and then put the top cover on. This is tricky, as the screws invariably fall off or prevent you from shutting the cover properly. It can be done. If you get it right, it ends up like the completed shot.



(6) Finished! Test it, make sure it works, etc. If it doesn't, examine the colour code you used, make sure it is correct. If you have access to a multimeter, set it to Ohms, follow the circuit diagram and see if what you've made checks out. If you have made errors, carefully desolder and make corrections. If your errors are huge, i.e. if every single connection is wrong because you read numbers on the plugs wrongly (easily done), desolder the whole lot and cut the cable ends and restrip and start again. Good luck!



(5) The 25-way cover is assembled in the same way, but watch how you fit both cables through the cable clamp, if you have thickish cable. The same applies to those tricky screws. The cover screws are also opposite facing, i.e. you see the head of one and the bolt of the other, this is normal.



4STIX

Note from the Editor

Due to so many letters arriving on our doorstep, we are unable to print as many as we would like. However, we try and publish as many letters as possible, and this sometimes entails editing them to shorter, more manageable lengths. After all, if we printed some of the eight to ten-page letters that we often get, there would be no room for anything else! So, if you write in and aim to get your letter published, keep it short and concise - that way it is more likely to get printed in its entirety. Otherwise, we have to pick out the interesting points and print these, so apologies to anyone who has had their letter trimmed down.

Like father, like son

Many thanks for a great magazine, ST Action really is in a class of its own. I am rapidly approaching middle age and have a five-year-old son. I recently bought an Atari 520STFM so that he could grow up with a computer. I get the games, he gets the educational software! Any chance that you could do a review of educational software in the future?

A 'How to program games' feature would be a great idea - could you start at a simple level for us thickies?

Alaric Gillard
Tyersal
W Yorkshire

P.S. I think the cover graphics by Steinar Lund are terrific.

Educational software is rather a specialist topic and is not really a subject to be covered by a games magazine. However, our other ST title, ST World, deals with all other aspects of the ST and, as such, will occasionally feature educational software. I say occasionally, as this seems to be the frequency with which educational software is released. So my advice would be to keep an eye open for such articles appearing in ST World.

We are currently working on a series of short features in which programmers give hints and examples of how to program code specific to the games world, such as, sprite generation and animation, scrolling and joystick inputs. However, while this seems to be what most readers who have written to the magazine want, it will have to be at the expense of other articles, as there is only so much space in the magazine. Please write in with your comments and wishes.

Would it be acceptable to have a bi-monthly, four-page article on how to program games, for example, or would you want more, or less? While we would attempt to keep the articles as simple as possible, some compromise has to be made in order not to bore the more technically aware programmers.

**The Letters Desk,
ST Action,
10 Theatre Lane,
Chichester,
West Sussex,
PO19 1SR**

More letters, please, as the only way we can tell what you REALLY want, is for you to write in and tell us.

TV quiz

Five years ago I was respected by many. As time has progressed this respect has lessened until the present day when I am constantly ridiculed by fellow humans. What am I talking about? Well, dare I say it... I own a... Spectrum! (Gosh! Horror!)

But I am not to be beaten! I have just left school and will soon start work, so the first thing I will save up for is an ST. To get into the general feel of things, I bought ST Action and found it excellent. What more could a person ask for? (Put it this way, when you are a Speccy owner, you have the choice of three mags: one features a rabid teddy bear, one has childish jokes and the other pretends that the 8-bit market will always be the largest!)

I have just one question - is a television set adequate enough to show the detailed and colourful pictures of ST games, as I do not really want to have to buy a monitor at the same time I purchase my ST (it would mean waiting a few more months for the money)?

Craig Thornton
Nettleham
Lincoln

A television is fine for most programs written for the ST, and the graphics still come over as very good. In some cases, I actually prefer to play using the TV. Take Gunship, for example. With the larger picture afforded by, say, a 27" television, the action becomes that much larger and, correspondingly, more simulative of a helicopter cockpit. The one area where the TV does fall down badly is in text adventures. Some are alright as they allow you to change the size of the text, but others have quite small text that, while being perfectly readable on a colour monitor, makes for severe eyestrain on TVs.

My advice would be to buy the ST and play the games. If you are into text adventures, enjoy art packages or find that your TV is not quite up to scratch, then save up for that monitor. The two main advantages with a monitor are: the vastly improved resolution and detail; and it also saves disagreement when you want to play Oids and the rest of the family want the Bond movie on ITV!

Life's a bind

It is so refreshing to read an original and well-thought-out magazine. However, as we want to keep our ST Actions in mint condition for years to come, how about making a special ST Action binder for the mags? This could be offered on mail order perhaps? What do you think?

Patrick O'Connor
Great Beddow
Chelmsford

We are looking into producing binders for your ST Action collection. We'll keep you informed of any developments.

The price of pirates

I have just a few words to say about the prices of ST software and the software houses that publish them. For a start, the reason for the price of ST games is due to software piracy. Many of you may disagree, but it is true that if the price of games dropped, then so would the numbers of pirates, as it would mean that more people would be able to afford ST games more regularly and would not have to resort to getting the latest games off their 'mates'.

I know writing ST games is an expensive and difficult job, but if they dropped their prices by £10 they would make up the difference by selling to the people who would normally copy the game. Granted, there are a few selfish **?!*!*? out there who would copy a game whatever the price, and all I can say to them is 'you are killing the software industry'. If I can't afford a game I save up and wait until I can afford it instead of illegally copying games off anybody who has them.

Gary Wigg
Aylesbury
Bucks

I applaud your attitude towards piracy. One small point, however. If the price of games dropped, then, yes, I would agree that the numbers of pirates would also fall. However, I do not think that this is entirely the reason. After all, just as many people pirate 8-bit games and these still cost very little in comparison.

I asked Rod Cousens, head of Mediagenic (Activision) Europe about this and he said that the price reflects a much greater development time due to the increased capabilities of the machine, but also reflects the size of the user base. With the 16-bit market being relatively new, there is not the massive base of users that, say, the Commodore or Speccy have. Therefore, to recoup the development costs, and possibly the licence, with a smaller amount of units sold, the price has to be higher for the software company to survive. He forecasts, however, that with an increase in the number of machines over the next year and a

half, the price for full-price software will eventually come down to something like £14.99, with budget games weighing in at £10.

One good quote that I overheard was by a programmer who wrote a high-quality commercial game. In one breath he was saying that he occasionally pirated software and thought nothing of it, and in the other he was complaining about lack of money because of people pirating his game! For me, that just about says it all as far as piracy is concerned for me - an 'I'm alright, Jack, never mind about everyone else' attitude. What do you think?

Who is this certain person?

I am glad to see that your mag has got what it takes to succeed - good full-colour reviews, interviews, nice layout, cheats and pokes - do I need to go on?

Please put the games programming section in, as I'm sure a lot of people will love it. Also, here's a few suggestions for your mag: a hardware review section, a penpal section, and how about a star letter of the month to encourage more letters? Keep up the mega work

Alex Taylor
Manchester

P.S. What is the name of the person who gives the replies? Is he/she going to remain nameless for eternity?

I've already mentioned about the programming series, so I won't go into all that again. As for the hardware reviews, we will do these on a regular basis, but not every month. The pen-pal section would take up more valuable review space so, unless you want to lose some game reviews each month, this one is shelved for the moment, I'm afraid.

As for the 'star letter of the month', you really are a bunch of mercenaries. I would quite happily sell my house and all it's contents to see my letter printed in ST Action. (Apologies to Not The Nine O'Clock News for that last piece of paraphrasing!) After all that, though, note has been taken and I'm sure something can be worked out.

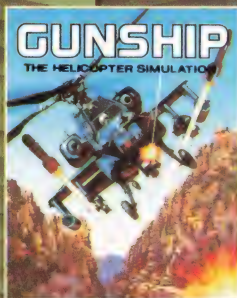
As for the anonymous person writing this column (that's me, I cry!) I shall remain anonymous no longer. My name is Martin Moth and, apart from this column, I am responsible for, amongst other things, writing the news pages each month. I will

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attempt to answer each query with an honest and straightforward answer, and not some wisecracking remark and, at times, I may have to call on the technical expertise of David Stewart to help me out. As I've stated many times before, the magazine relies on you, the reader, to tell us where to improve things, so please write in and tell us where there is room for improvement. In this way, reader satisfaction will increase.

Take two

Let me start by saying this: I am not going to tell you the good things about your magazine because the 88 pages you have in STA would not be enough. I am also not going to tell you the bad things either, as I cannot find any major faults.

So, why am I writing? Well, I would just like you to answer my two questions:

1) Why are you printing this letter?

Seriously, though...

1) Why are there so many different types and sizes of packaging for games on the Atari ST? Why can't it be like the Spectrum and Commodore?

2) How many Atari ST owners are there compared to Spectrum and Commodore 64 and Amstrad. What will these figures be like in a year or two?

Please print this letter. Thanks a lot.

Chris Taylor

Aspley

P.S. If you print this letter, I will buy ST Action for all my friends and I'll say I'm a famous writer.

P.P.S. I have 58 friends. This will generate £75.40 in extra sales and make you a little richer.

It seems that the idea behind the difference in packaging is to make the product stand out on the software shelves and to make it more attractive and classy. However, there seems to be two main schools of thought on packaging at the moment. One is the roughly A5-sized cardboard boxes favoured by the likes of MicroProse and Rainbird, and the clear plastic CD-styled boxes of Firebird and Electronic Arts. I suppose there are good and bad points about both these designs, but I personally prefer the cardboard variety, as I'm a clumsy so-and-so at the best of times, and one fumble with the clear plastic boxes and... smash, one broken box. The card boxes also allow for more 'bump' and a larger manual to be enclosed. However, the clear plastic ones do look very 'snazzy'.

As for the number of owners for the respective machines, no-one can really be sure, due to much hyping of the figures by all concerned. However, there are many more times the number of C64s and Spectrums than STs, with the figure for the first two being in the low millions, whilst the ST base is around 100,000 at the moment and climbing rapidly. The

C64 and Spectrum sales are slowing down, so in a year, or thereabouts, I would expect to find the 16-bit machines taking over the role of 'home computer' that the two 8-bit machines have enjoyed so far.

As for your P.P.S, you had better start saving!

Big Demo

I am a student at Orwell High School and have recently started a Public Domain library, but this is not any old rip-off library. Here you get value for money. I am writing to tell everyone about a great new product from Holland that has just arrived. It's called 'The Big Demo', and it is BIG. It consists of over 75 songs, which are all taken from the C64 (Monty on the Run, Crazy Comets, Commando and Thrust, to name but a few). But that's not the best thing about the disk. There are six digitally-recorded tunes on the disk and Exceptions, who created the program, have found a means of recording them so that each song lasts about 5 minutes without repeating itself. If you would like a copy of this demo, then please write to me at the address below and enclose £1.75 for the complete package.

Thanks for a brill mag, and keep up the good work.

Robert Somebody (as I am unable to decipher scrawly signatures so, please, in future, print your name at the bottom of the letter)

**RX2 PD Services
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Unfortunately, Robert neglected to send us a copy of his demo, so I can't verify whether or not his claims are true. Anyway, if anyone else wants to write in about a useful or interesting PD disk, then drop us a line and enclose the disk so that we can make up our minds as to whether or not it is worth publicising. With all due respect to Robert, we do not want to be criticised for unloading dodgy mail order PD services onto the public.

On the same line, if you have had any good, or bad, dealings with mail order companies, then drop us a line and we'll pass the message on.

SKYCHASE

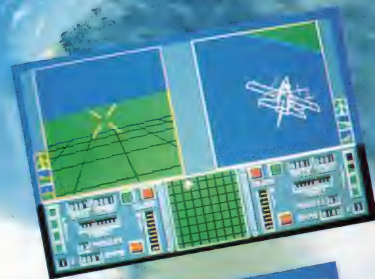
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Keyboard control rules, okay?

The battle between Atari's ST and Commodore's Amiga is comparable to the one Sinclair had with Commodore. Although the C64 produced better software (just, I might add), the Spectrum was the better computer. Will Commodore end up losing again? I personally think they will.

Now down to the nitty-gritty. One thing that troubles me is that your reviews display a compatibility table for various things, such as, whether the game will run on mono or colour. Well, it is often given in the tables that games do not have keyboard control as a game option. Being a keyboard man myself, I think every game SHOULD have the OPTION to choose between joystick or keyboard - for the money that a game costs it should go without question. What do you think?

Darren Cunningham
Ardwick
Manchester

The trouble with keyboard controls these days is that it is often an unrealistic way of controlling games. The software houses try and make the game as realistic as possible and, in the case of, say, a flight simulator, one does not normally fly an aircraft by pressing a numeric keypad. Also, in the case of arcade conversions, they are made as faithful to the original as possible and this often means joystick control. However, games that benefit from keyboard controls normally have it incorporated, such as, Skulldigger and Super Sprint. Lately, however, games are coming on the market that need both joystick and keyboard used in unison to play the game successfully.

Are there any more of you out there who prefer keyboard controls?

Feedback answered

I am fulfilling your request for 'feedback' in the letters section. Jason Allen made several interesting points, the latter of which you have already included in issues two and three with, in my opinion, a large amount of success. However, I am warning you straight away to stop dead any thoughts you might have of putting his first two points (a high score table and a games chart) into practice.

Firstly, the high score table. Whoever dreamed up the idea in the first place must have so much faith in human nature that he could not have spent a minute of his life in the real world. If you ask someone their highest score for a particular game, do you not think that there is the tiniest, minutest little chance that they might exaggerate by half a million points or so. At this moment in time, I regret to inform you that our humanoid technology is not quite advanced enough for us to invent a 'lie detection

machine' making it impossible to distinguish between a valid and a void score.

Secondly, there was the games chart idea. This is the first step towards the magazine being made up purely of misleading advertisements. Far too often an expensive game is sold by packaging alone, while the program itself, unknown to the purchaser, is far less glamorous and innovative than its box and advertisements suggest. The people stupid or inexperienced enough to buy the game would boost its chart rating, thus causing more people to buy it.

There are two solutions to this. One is to keep the number of adverts to a minimum (this also makes the mag a more enjoyable read) and, secondly, set aside half a page each month for your opinions on the month's best buys, as I am sure this would be of much more use than a games chart.

I am sure this is not the type of letter you want to print as my views on the above subjects are highly controversial. Even so, I hope you take note of the points I have made.

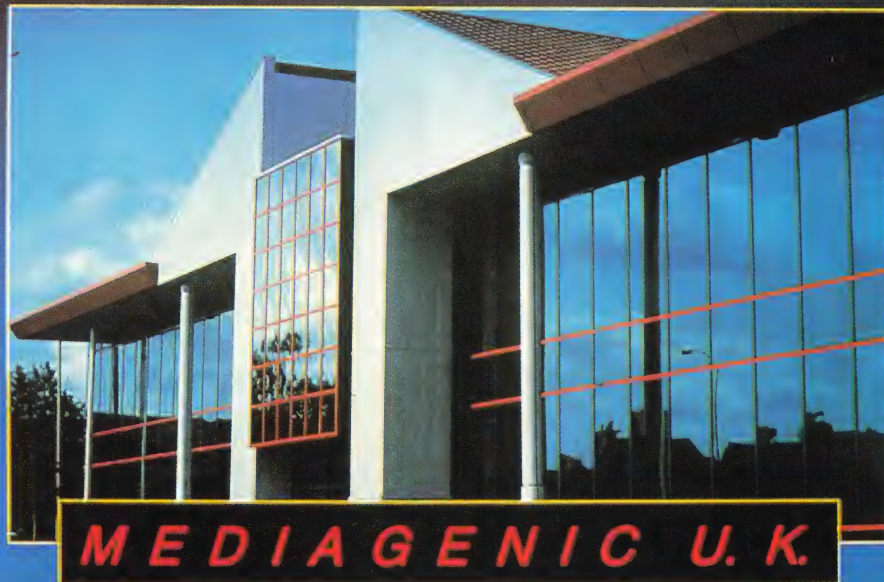
Ewan J Nettleton
Rusholme
Manchester

I think that we have agreed amongst ourselves at ST Action that the games chart and high score table would not be a good idea. However, as for your two solutions, I'm afraid that I beg to differ. I might prefer the magazine to have less ads, but they do make for interesting reading as well, especially if you are looking to buy a game from a mail order house. Also, most people do not realise this, but advertising revenue plays an important part in magazines these days. The revenue that is generated by a magazine sale in the shops is quite small, especially when you consider that the shop, the dealer and the distributor have to have their 'cut' of the magazine price. Okay, so if we sell loads of mags then we make more money, but the printing and paper costs also rise. This is balanced by a higher 'target market' for potential advertisers, and so advertising rates go up. This allows us to afford a higher quality magazine for you to read.

With reference to your 'opinions column' it is something we are looking into and might possibly implement in the near future. Do other readers agree with this idea?

STAJ

COVER STORY



Mediagenic is quite a new name in the industry. However, if you say 'Activision', then most people know who you are talking about. Mediagenic is now the corporate name that encompasses Activision, Electric Dreams and many other media companies. Martin Moth visited Mediagenic's offices in Hampstead to meet, among others, Rod Cousens, head of Mediagenic Europe. He reports on his findings.

One thing that immediately struck me as I entered the offices at 0930 was the lack of people around at the time. However, first appearances do not always give the true picture, and this was no exception. Having the main Mediagenic offices in Menlow Park, California, means that many a phone call crosses 'the pond' during the day. With the time difference between the two offices, the easy solution is to start late and work late in London. Therefore, although most people start between half-past nine and ten in the morning, they work on through until six, seven or eight o'clock in the evening.

The offices were in a bit of a state when I called, as the basement had flooded completely a few days beforehand and so chairs and tables were dispersed around the upper floors of the building, drying out. Also, Mediagenic are moving to new offices in August, so there was the chaos associated with getting ready to move. I was shown around the offices by Amanda Barry, Mediagenic's PR Manager and introduced to the people who work in Hampstead. The other half of Mediagenic's UK interest is Electric Dreams, who work at Software Studios in Southampton - more of which later. I've profiled three people in this article - Rod Cousens, head of Mediagenic Europe, Larry Sparks, Marketing Manager, and Stuart Hibbert, Software Producer with Software Studios. In this way I have attempted to give a taste of what the company is about, whilst at the same time concentrating on specific people and their tasks, interests and goals within the industry.

MEDIAGENIC Mini Profile - Rod Cousens

'I love this business and I am dedicated to the industry. It excites me. I love technological changes and I also love gadgets.' So speaks Rod Cousens, head of Mediagenic Europe.

I met Rod and we started discussing the new games that he has under develop-

ment, such as R-Type, Super Hang-On and Afterburner. I commented that, at the moment, the market seemed to be exploding with endorsed titles, whether it be an arcade, film, or personality licence. I made the point that quite a few endorsed games had been released lately only to be hammered by the press as being between mediocre and downright abysmal. Rod agreed.

'Mediagenic participate in this at the moment so there is a certain amount of hypocrisy in what I say. However, public awareness created by an endorsement, whether it be an arcade or film licence is very effective in terms of making the consumer buy the product. Also, at Christmas, most of the sales will not be by kids, but by their parents or grand parents and they rely quite heavily on what they see and know, thus giving credence to the licence argument as a sales booster.'

'Having said that, it's so competitive out there now, and the cost of product development has risen so sharply, both in terms of licence and the actual coding, that companies have got to publish a good product. Those that don't, ultimately do fall down. All



companies have their hits and misses, but hopefully, one has more winners than losers.'

'It's an interesting thing that if you look at either the motion picture or music industry and you forget the recording artists

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ATARI ST screen shots shown.



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MEDIAGENIC

(as far as you are able to because they drive it), one year CBS will be hot because they're distributing Michael Jackson on Epic, or George Michael at the moment goes through CBS distribution, and the next year they'll do nothing and someone like Virgin or EMI will come to the front. It's the same with the software industry, with U.S. Gold being at the fore for the last year or two, but this year, although they have released a few good games, there might soon be a time when they're looking over their shoulders at others, such as ourselves or Ocean, coming up in the outside lane.'

'In my view (and I stand to be proved totally wrong), this Christmas it's going to be between Operation Wolf, from Ocean, and Afterburner, from Activision. I think those two will fight it out for number one. The one that U.S. Gold figure can compete, but I don't think it will, is Thunderblade. The interesting thing is that both Afterburner and Thunderblade are licensed from Sega, so Sega are phoning both companies and saying: "Hey, don't go up against each other on this", because Sega are then competing against themselves!'

Anyway, we were digressing, so I enquired after the history of Activision then, Mediagenic now. What were the origins of Activision?

'Activision was founded as a VCS company rather than computer software as we define it today. There were four guys; three were from Atari that was. They put this little company together and wrote games for the Atari 2600. The company literally went from zero to \$158 million. It was the largest company of its type in the US and it went public. Unfortunately, within weeks of it going public, the VCS market was over-saturated and the market disappeared.'

'The company turnover dramatically decreased to under half of the above figure. Activision, geared to support a turnover of \$158 million, with all the personnel that this meant, entered a period of losses that had to be redressed, especially as Activision had had the benefit of going public, had the resources of going public but, equally, had the responsibility of answering to the shareholders. Jim Leavy, who was running the show then, took the decision to move into computer software. They had all the resources to do so; they viewed the coming machines, which in those days were the Commodore 64 and the Vic 20 thereafter in the US, and saw that they should invest in computer software and build for the future. The transformation took a long time because Activision took a global view of operations and planned to reach the world market; a brave step to take at a time when they were facing heavy losses.'

'So they moved into computer software on a worldwide basis. I came along with

a company called Electric Dreams. I was with Quicksilver beforehand. We sold Quicksilver to British Electric Traction and I signed a three-year service agreement and stayed for one year - things just didn't work out. After that, I decided that I wanted to stay in the computer industry. So I set up this company called Electric Dreams with the backing of Activision. Greg Fishbak, who was the President of Activision International at this time, was a personal friend of mine who I had grown to know from my Quicksilver days and, after discussions, he agreed to the deal with Electric Dreams, so in many ways, Electric Dreams became a distrib-



uted arm of Activision UK, run by myself. From there, I moved into Activision and had the responsibility for running Activision as it was then and its affiliated pub-



lishers, and then on until we reach the present day.' 'I had the benefit of going out to the US from the early days and noticing the cultural differences and the differences between the types of software that work in that territory and the types of software that work here. If Activision was making any form of mistake in those days, it was making the assumption that whatever they produced in the US would automatically sell over here. Some did, some didn't. So we moved away from that way of thinking. I think one of the most significant things I did, and one that is starting to pay dividends, is the establishment of the development group Software Studios (based in Southampton), whereby we source product within the UK for the European market whilst, at the same time, we can take some of those products to the

United States or Japan, those being the three key areas in the world.'

'I am pleased with the progress we have made. Everyone has worked terribly hard and continues to do so. As a global company we are the leaders in the world - that is a fact, not some PR hype. You see, one of the advantages, or disadvantages, of being a public company is that every year we have to publish our trading performance, and if companies question the above statement, they have the ability to publish their accounts against ours, but elect not to, and I ask the question, why?'

'So, I have this vehicle which is a great resource to me and take whatever we have developed here and offer it, because it is not an automatic acceptance, to the US and Japanese markets. Normally we have to adapt them to fit the different markets. One of the interesting things with us being an international company is to take something like an Infocom adventure, and try and prepare it for the German market. For a start, the layout

of the game raises questions, with the text on the screen and the language conversion, and one of the things that we've done recently is to licence Infocom into Japan, so they've somehow got to get Japanese characters onto the screen whilst keeping the gameplay as good as it is in English - God knows how they'll recapture the humour! That's just an example, but as you can see, being an international company makes it that much more interesting.'

We started to chat about the Japanese market, and I found that there, although it is a very large market, there are also

some strange quirks, not just with the users but also with the manufacturers. So just what are the machines that sell in Japan, and what is the market like there?

'It's quite interesting there because the sales of consoles has peaked. The Nintendo family computer was far and away the biggest with over 40% of the TOY market, i.e. the 'every home should have one' syndrome. But market research seems to suggest that the market has become saturated, and it's only the games, such as Dragons Quest, that will achieve the numbers that, before, were commonplace. When you deal with the Japanese, you meet this cultural situation of total trust, honesty and integrity. It's frowned upon if you play them off against each other or anything like that, even though they will elect to do that back to you. It's against the accepted business principles in their market to do that. Anyway, they produced a disk machine for the market and, to their horror, they found that people were pirating software, which they did not believe would happen in a Japanese society. So they reacted to it and actually stopped production of the machine and went back to the cartridge-based machines. It's one way of dealing with pirates!'

'MSX is not significant there, with only around a million units being sold, which in that market is not a great deal considering

Nintendo have sold around eleven million units. The PC engine has sold around half a

million units and there is a question as to whether or not we should develop anything for it. At the top end there are MS-DOS machines, most of which come from NEC. However, from the point of view of STs, you are looking to Europe as its major strength. Neither the ST nor Amiga has made any impact in the Japanese market. So it's all fascinating stuff and one of the things that I try and do sometimes is to work out how we, as a global company, can address these three markets, and sometimes I come to the conclusion that we can't. You see, a product that we develop here will not necessarily work in the States nor will it work in Japan. Sometimes it may work between the United Kingdom and Japan, or the US and UK, or solely in Japan. Occasionally, there is one game, and the perfect example of that is Ghostbusters, that will sell well in all three markets.'

It turned out that Ghostbusters was what you or I would call a 'lucky strike' for Activision at the time. Rod explains: 'The licence was acquired opportunistically by Greg Fishbak as he sat on a Regent Air flight as he flew across the United States. By pure chance, he was given the seat next to the President of Columbia Pictures and they started chatting. This game in all formats has sold over one-and-a-half million units across the three markets.'

A few months ago, Activision changed its corporate name to Mediagenic. I asked how the change came about and what were the reasons behind it.

'It came about at the instigation of Bruce Davis, who is the President of the company, in as much as he felt that our audience perceived Activision to be an entertainment label, and whilst that is a significant and substantial part of our company, we wanted to be seen to be a broader company, and be more able to move freely into different areas. We felt that the 'games label' tag that Activision had acquired was detrimental to being taken seriously in other fields. Additionally, if we wanted to have any form of innovation, particularly in the areas of Compact Disc, film, video or digital video technology, then we had to have a bigger umbrella, and Mediagenic was formed to allow us to do that. However, we have broken down within Mediagenic, smaller business units - Activision is now an entertainment division and, as such, is a business unit and is responsible for its own profit and loss.'

'That was the theory behind Mediagenic - we needed to broaden our outlook and develop the areas in which we could par-

ticipate. The expression is, and it's very aptly put, that Mediagenic is a 'multiple-media

company', so how you define that is whatever that is today. Technology is changing fast and we want to participate, so whatever that media is, we'll have something that performs in that area. As for the future, whatever the technology, we will address it, whether it be CD-ROM, CDI, or any other development.'

MEDIAGENIC Mini profile - Larry Sparks

I met Larry Sparks, Marketing Manager, and asked about his job, and what targets

he seeks in order to fulfil his role.

'Basically, I see my job as having two facets to it. One is to increase the awareness and profile of the company overall and, secondly, to improve the marketing mix that we adopt for our titles that we put out on the streets. Most people think that successful marketing is specifically knowing what your target audience want. Okay, that's fine, we all know the answer to that question. However, the key factor to successful marketing is to know your competitors, know what their weaknesses are, how they are going about marketing their products, and how you can attack them, i.e. whether you come in along the flanks, or go straight ahead.'

'So one of the key things that I am trying to do, and that we are achieving slowly, is to get together tight marketing plans, product by product, that are innovative. Ideas that haven't been used before and have a slight slant to them so that they really make us stick out, not only on the shelfspace, but also as far as the targeted audience is concerned. That means our packaging, our marketing, our promotion, our competitions have that 'grab factor' so that the consumers actually remember us, and say 'Yeah, Activision did that, Electric Dreams did this' etc..'

'Those are the important elements that I am trying to achieve over the next few years. So if those are the key objectives, how do we go about attaining them? First of all, with regards to our big products that we are bringing out, such as Afterburner, the objective is to plan as far ahead as possible, six months in advance if you can do that, so that you can then work towards that plan. So, as you can see, if you take all those elements into account, the aim is to bring together a tightly-knit marketing team - not a department - a

'team', so that we can go out there and hit the competition and move ourselves up to number two this year, which is what our objective is. Twenty-four months after that we are then looking to take over the number one slot. So its an exciting time.'

'I'm also looking towards giving value for money on our packaging side and moving more, if the market dictates, towards box-type packaging. As we know from Infocom, one of the added attractions is the freebies and added extras that they put inside the box. The buyers love this and, if you have a game with 'added freebies', the perceived value increases. What we are trying to achieve within the company is to give the consumer more for his money, so that he'll think "I bought that product from Activision last time, it was great and I got all these bits and bobs in it", etc., etc.. On the other hand, one also sets oneself up, as the kids then tend to expect you to do that time and time again, and when they buy a plain cassette case with only the game and instructions in, they'll say: "Okay, where's the freebie" and feel let down. So I think it's fair to say we'll reserve this for the more important titles, and the other titles will adopt the standard packaging that we use at the moment.'

'One important factor that lets the industry down badly at the moment is the lack of market research that is available to date. Far too much emphasis has been placed on hearsay, "I think", and "gutfeeling", etc.. It's the only industry I know that one enters to market a product and there just isn't the wealth of statistics to back up your marketing judgement. It maybe because the industry is very young, only five years or so, but I think it is about time the industry made a move towards gathering statistics so that we can make better, more qualified marketing judgements. So, what we are trying to do internally is to gather as much information on the market, not only what the retailers, the independents and the multiples want, but also try to find out what the buyers



want as well. We're hacking through the retail side, so the next stage is to find out what the consumers want.'

'What I'm also trying to do promotion-wise at the moment is to tie in products with other media, i.e. television, video and film. Too many companies have relied on

MEDIAGENIC

purely advertising as a promotional tool for their games. Now, don't get me wrong, adverts are important, but I am looking for more effective ways of spending marketing resources than purely booking a group of adverts. This will mean more PR, more promotions, more competitions. We will also be looking to use other types of media and different angles of attack. Then we back that up with advertising. One idea we had for the launch of Afterburner this year, if the funds can stretch that far, is to do trailers in the cinemas before the launch, say, in October or November. Just imagine it, you have your captivated audience in the cinema to see the film, whatever you have chosen that best fits the bill, and you hit them with an Afterburner trailer and - Whoosh! "Wow! Afterburner from Activision - I've got to go out and buy it". That's the philosophy and we'll be investigating it. Therefore, as you can see, any type of angles that we can use, we will - we want to be different this year, and I, for one, think that it will work.'

MEDIAGENIC

Stuart Hibbert - Software Producer

After having visited the Hampstead offices of Mediagenic, I paid a visit to Southampton to see Software Studios, home of Electric Dreams. There I spoke to Stuart Hibbert.

Stuart's a Software Producer and I started by asking him what was involved in being a Software Producer.

'Being a Software Producer basically means being in charge of the day-to-day running of software projects, sorting out all the hassles, ensuring the game maintains a certain quality and taking all the necessary decisions along the way so that we finally come up with a high-quality, playable finished game. It also means coordi-

inating with the programmers, the graphic artists, the musicians, the games designers, plus ourselves in Software Studios.'

With the rash of arcade licences on the market at the moment, these games do not pose much of a problem to produce other than to make a faithful copy of the arcade version. However, with more ordinary titles, there needs to be careful planning from the beginning in order to produce a game that will work. I asked Stuart how such a game would start life.

'First would be the idea for the game and then a storyboard would be made up. This is made as comprehensive as possible so that the concept of the game is there from the start rather than letting the game evolve, which takes an awful lot of time and even more money. It also works out a greater risk. Once the storyboard is complete, we then have to match the game to the people who will produce the game. Some programmers, for example, are very good at arcade versions, but are loathe to take on anything original, because it's slower work, requires more thought than just copying from an arcade game. However, that's not to say that

arcade version programmers are technically less able. After all, I wouldn't like to be the programmers tasked with converting Afterburner onto home micros.'

'Anyway, we have to match the artist, programmer and musician together in order to get the right team for the job. It can often take a couple of months to get everyone you want to work on a particular project. As far as allocating memory to each person goes, I prefer to go over the top with graphics. The way I look at it, I'd rather chuck stuff out than find that we did not have enough. So we try and get to the situation where we can take the best and throw the rest out. Programmers always have a byte or two more that they can push into if they have to. They tend to 'stick' by saying, "this is how much we can allocate", but we just keep pushing more and more and at the end of the day we hope to get the right product mix.'

'If there were problems with a program then we'd get recommendations back. We would then go back to the programmer, musician or artist and say, "look, we need to improve on this and that". Both Neil (Neil Jackson) and myself have programming knowledge, so they can't pull the wool over our eyes by saying something isn't possible when we know that it is. There is a lot of coordination involved, not people phoning up and saying, "I don't like this". All the facts

get assembled here and then decisions are taken to improve the product.'

I visited Software Studios on a Wednesday and bumped into Rod again. I asked Stuart if Rod's visits were frequent.

'Rod normally comes down every Wednesday as he is in charge of product development. He over-looks what is going on and sorts out any problems, if there are any.

Also being a separate office, he likes to keep in touch on a personal level, as it makes everything so much easier than talking down the phone to someone stuck in London who doesn't really know the whole situation of just what is going on in the suburbs of Southampton. However, I think it is a good idea that we are all moving under one roof in Reading. However, we still have a while to go on our lease here, so we'll be the last to move.'

There we have it. Lack of space prevents me from continuing further, although I could write all day about what people at Mediagenic had to say. As has already been mentioned throughout this article, there really is an energy associated with Mediagenic that is rarely noticed elsewhere in the industry. The company know what to aim for, are attacking their goals in the most professional way and I, for one, think that it is only a matter of time before they get what they set out for. Thanks once again to Amanda Barry for arranging everything and putting up with me.

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CASE FOR CONVERSION

Operation Wolf - Taito

As usual, the enemy have kidnapped some innocent people. As usual, it's up to you to save them. As usual, you are alone against hundreds. As usual, this is the storyline of a "new" arcade

energy, can be found during each level.

Occasionally, stretcher-bearing nurses and wounded hostages rush across the screen. The idea is not to shoot them - after all, you're there to save them!

Cover from enemy fire is available in the form of oil

ends.

The light gun used in Operation Wolf is not really needed, as you don't use the sight mounted on the gun after a few games, and it could easily be replaced with a screen target, a la Prohibition. No gameplay or excitement would be lost from the game, and this would allow easy translation onto computer.

The graphics of Operation Wolf are very colourful and detailed, yet the large sprites aren't particularly well animated. The intermission pictures are of a standard quality, and the scrolling is smooth, if a little slow. Apart from the sprite jerkiness, the graphics allow for some mindless spraying of bullets, which really gets the adrenaline pumping!

In some respects, Operation Wolf is rather suited to the ST. Nothing is beyond its capabilities, with slow scrolling and rapid firing, and the game should make an interesting and fun conversion. Music and speech are included in the arcade original, but whether they will appear in a conversion is not known or important.

Even in the arcades, Taito's latest isn't an awesome game, just fun. It has limited appeal compared to other games, but it should still make a playable conversion on the ST.

1943 - Capcom

While 1943 was not a particularly good year for wine, it had its moments in arcade games. However, 1943 was not a good year for anything - especially Hitler.

But it's all too easy to blame a chosen period for Capcom's incompetence.

The basic idea of this uninspiring sequel is to undertake a mission to wipe out the enemy's fleets. Whether your mission is a success or not depends on how many opposers to the western powers you manage to knock off. A percentage of over 90% dead evil-doers means a successful level.

Your fighting machine is a cool World War 2 plane, and with it you are expected to annihilate the enemy's forces which have taken a



game.

Apart from the dated concept, "Operation Wolf" is quite an enjoyable game. A light gun has been mounted on the cabinet to add a more realistic atmosphere, and the screen has been mirrored to a distance, allowing you to spray the enemy rather satisfactorily.

The play area on Operation Wolf continuously scrolls to the left, with enemies leaping out from all sides. Included in their impressive armoury are armoured trucks, tanks and hovering helicopters, as well as foot soldiers who carry guns and knives. To shoot them, you can use either bullets or grenades, both of which are in limited supply. Extra ammunition, as well as a super machine gun and new

drums and trees. However, they will also use these to cover themselves, and will also appear from behind huts and bunkers.

Each hit taken from the enemy fire will decrease your energy, which is dis-



played on the right of the screen. Certain weapons, such as knives, will have different destructive powers to, say, bullets. Once all of your energy is lost, then the game



strong dislike to you. Their attack takes place in the form of aircraft, battleships and large carriers, all taking different numbers of hits to destroy. The opposition's planes differ in size, and the larger ones have devastating fire power.

To bring back some hope of succeeding, extra weapons appear at various intervals during the game.

These weapons include some very destructive guns and a form of laser, which gets more powerful with accumulation.

After some frantic dog-fights with enemy aircraft, you will approach their ships. Mounted on these are gun turrets, which pose as a nasty threat as they churn out shell after shell. The only way to halt them, and subsequently their ship, is to destroy all of them. Once you have passed the ships you are



told whether or not your mission was a success, you proceed to the next level.

1943 certainly isn't the most overwhelming game that's ever been created. The graphics are basic, with adequate detail and colour, and the backgrounds are very bland. A conversion is going to be simple, because there is absolutely nothing spectacular or special about the game. Sure, it has its moments, with the two players able to compete simultaneously, and a lot of blasting to be done - but it's all very mundane and pointless. Games like this make you wonder how we won the war in the first place!

Thunderblade - Sega

Following on with their own video-vehicle trend, Sega

Most arcade scenarios don't take an awful lot of knowledge to create, and Thunderblade certainly doesn't need a book to explain the mission. In fact, the only idea is that of progress, destroying as many enemies as possible, and bombing the warships which linger at the end of some levels. Sega obviously don't give credit to the intellect of arcade players!

You have bullets and missiles as your arsenal as you rush through the city and barren landscapes. Tanks and gun turrets are constantly strafing in an attempt to bring you down, and hostile jet fighters and choppers don't help your cause much, either.

Other obstacles include pillars of stone, bridges and forests, and high-rise apartments. Wiping out window boxes in these buildings

ing firepower, attempting to cut you down in your prime. Gun turrets fire at you from all angles, and your only option is to proceed at full speed, otherwise the ship will move ahead of you. Featured on the dedicated cabinet is a hydraulic chair that moves by operating the realistically-sized stick. You have two fire buttons on your left, allowing the choice of three speeds.

One of the most spectacular features in Thunderblade is the change of view. This alters after each level, from above to behind, and so on. These two views allow the game to be more in depth and interesting. The perspective on the backgrounds has also been well researched and adds yet another dimension to the gameplay. Although it isn't perfect, the scrolling and views of the background are the nearest to total realism created on an arcade machine.

My only niggle about Thunderblade, which is more about the cabinet than the game, concerns the music speaker. Now I love loud music - just ask Dennis - but the speakers are placed right next to your ears, and this can be pretty annoying. Conversionwise, Thunderblade won't be a piece of cake. The lack of hydraulics on your average ST won't be a problem, as they are more of a novelty than a necessity. Speed and smoothness certainly aren't novelties, though, as they account for more than 50% of the attraction, and will pose quite a problem for even the most experienced programmer. You can also expect a lot of disk accessing too, with many levels and two views (in effect doubling the game), having to be implemented.

Thunderblade's graphics use the same tech-

nique found in other Sega games, such as, Out-Run and Afterburner, and should suit the ST superbly. The only worry here, apart from the



speed and perspectives, is with the colours. As we all know, our ST's find it hard to manage over 16 colours at the best of times, which could leave a very dull display. However, this won't be the case and we won't be getting a second-rate conversion like Enduro Racer. But then we can all dream...

Afterburner - Sega

Sega are well renowned for their spectacular advancements in video game entertainment. Their hydraulic systems, such as, Out-Run and Thunderblade have enthralled and intrigued the whole industry, but none of their games has come as close to perfection as Afterburner.

As with other similar games, there isn't much of an explanation of the scenario, you're just expected to go out there (after putting in some money!) and get'em. Afterburner does it in much more style than most, though, and if you're listening carefully, we'll tell you why.....

Fuelled up and armed with supplies of ammo, your first and foremost thought is that of survival. Planes swarm on you, firing so many missiles that the sky turns black. This isn't going to be easy. Pushing forward on the short joystick, you dodge the mis-



have now released Thunderblade, ripe for conversion and criticism. But is flying a bladed machine through populated cities all it's cracked up to be?

with your rotor blades is much less bovver than a hover!

As you progress, you will occasionally come across warships with with-



siles, and then climb to face your attackers crossing the horizon. Pumping on the fire button for all your worth, five planes crash to the forest below. More thoughts enter your head - you're a qualified killer. But this is no time to go soft, Kid, there's a lot more killing to be done if you want to save the thousands of innocent people below you.

Pushing the stick into full acceleration mode, you dispose of a few more enemies, dodging the flak with a swift spin of your plane. Suddenly, a warning alarm sounds and you realise that a homing missile is about to blow your ass out of the sky. Without a second to spare, you slow down, and, just before the missile meets its target, you bang the stick into full speed, spin

the ship once more, and fly out of the missile's range. Understandably, you allow yourself a small smirk of satisfaction.....

Not only is Afterburner very addictive and overwhelmingly atmospheric, it can also be quite frustrating. Time after time, you will find your ship falling

to the ground and exploding into a smouldering heap. But, as long as you don't make the same mistake twice, learning how to deal with certain situations is half the fun of the game. There are many levels to reach and admire, each one being different from the last. On some levels you will be flying above the clouds,

others will have you speeding through valleys, and later levels include early-warning systems and buildings, forests and open spaces of land. Afterburner is in many ways similar to Thunderblade, and it will be equally difficult to convert. There's so much in the game that it's quite awe-inspiring. You are called to re-fuel after various levels, sometimes in the air and occasionally on the ground, and there are some amazing backgrounds, ingenious sprites,

and great speech throughout. Will it really be possible to convert such a "perfect" game? There are so many aspects to consider, and because of the size of the game, it will involve constant disk accessing. The speed and graphics are so good that we cannot hope for a straight conversion, and, with so much going on, we're doubtful as to whether any speech will be included. As with Thunderblade, we hope and pray for a first-class conversion, but Afterburner reeks so much of quality that we won't really know if the ST will be able to handle half of what the arcade machine delivers.

We can only hope Rod Cousens delivers the goods.....

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WINNERS

James Bond, Live and Let Die Competition

The competition set in issue 3 of ST Action in conjunction with Domark is now over, and for those that entered, here are the five lucky winners:

Mrs H R Hill, Stockton-on-Tees; Kevin Clements, Edinburgh; Allan Gill, Hull; Matthew Holmes, Dewsbury, and Clive Rimmer, Manchester.

Congratulations! Each of you will receive a video of Live and Let Die starring Roger Moore, and a book entitled, The Official James Bond Movie Book, featuring hundreds of colour piccies and the complete history of the Bond films.

The correct answers were:

1 - James Bond

2 - Octopussy, The Spy Who Loved Me, Dr. No, Goldfinger, From Russia With Love, Moonraker, Thunderball, The Living Daylights, A View To A Kill, On Her Majesty's Secret Service, Casino Royale, You Only Live Twice, Diamonds Are Forever, Never Say Never Again, The Man With The Golden Gun, For Your Eyes Only.

3 - Roger Moore

4 - Moneypenny

5 - Walther PPK Pistol

6 - Q

Mirrorsoft Competition

The lucky winner of the day out at Goodwood, a flight in an aircraft and a look round the Spitfire based there, is M D Pruett, of Severn Beach, Bristol. Congratulations to him.

The answers were:

A - Spitfire 40

B - Oids

C - Dungeon Master

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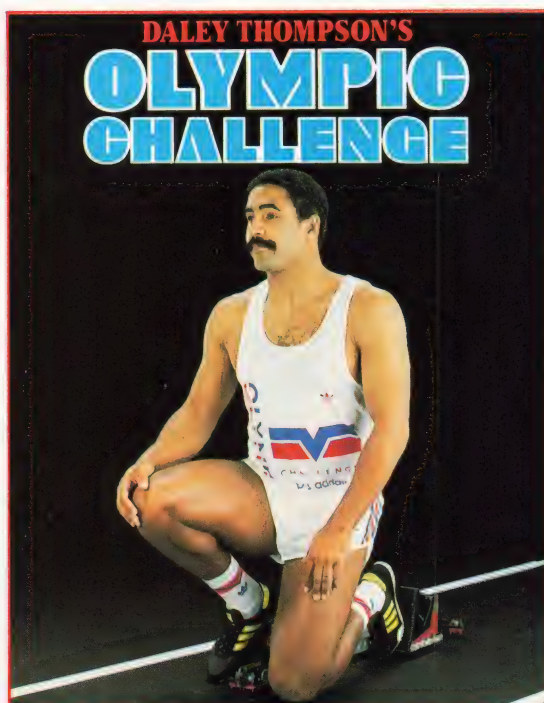
FUEL FOR FIEN



Your plane has ditched on a mountainous plateau somewhere in deepest Tibet. You and your companions are alive. A large shape moves toward you, you rub your eyes in disbelief; a Dinosaur! — where are you ... and when? Stunning, monochromatic 3D graphics and 4 way scrolling, give that '50's cinema mood as you learn not only to survive, but also that your companions are not all they first seemed!

FROM

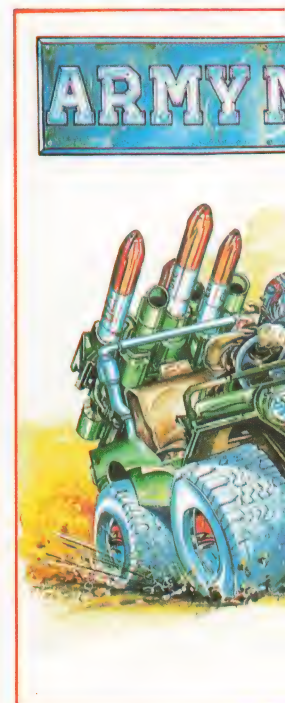
ocean



Digitised graphics, referencing from full colour photographs of Daley Thompson himself, take full advantage of the Amiga's and the Atari's capabilities giving you a state-of-the-art sports simulation. Featuring an optional game play which allows you to 'work out' in the gym where your performance will directly affect your performance in the final events themselves — another first for Ocean!

FROM

ocean



Dinamic's attention to detail and superior graphics presentation add an extra dimension and Army Moves is no exception. A full-blown shoot-em-up taking you through several levels where you will take command of first an armoured jeep, then helicopter and finally, on foot as you make your way through the jungle to the enemy's headquarters ultimately to seek out vital documents.

FROM

ocean

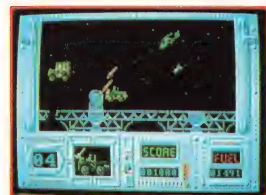
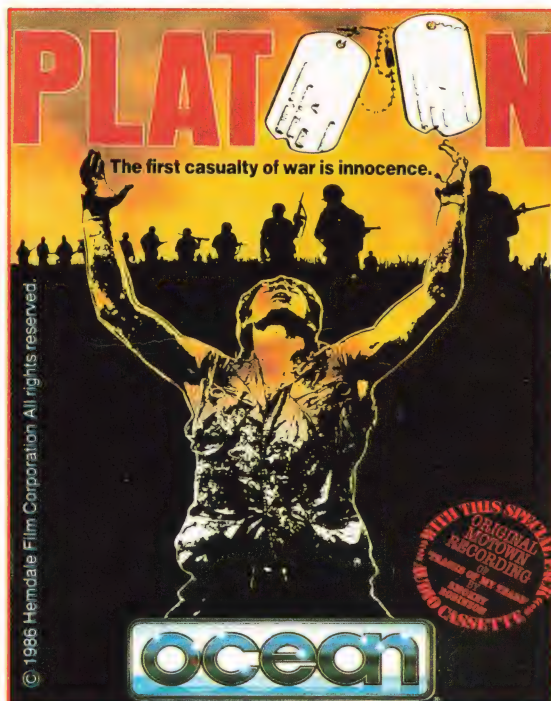
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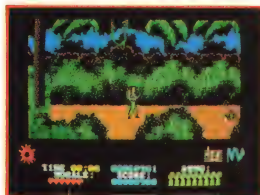


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GIVING THE GAME AWAY

Hi! a slightly longer intro this month. First of all, ripping off tips. Don't do it! This month I couldn't believe it when someone (who will, luckily for them, remain anonymous) sent in OUR own Black Lamp poke! Secondly, software winners. Please, when writing, state the choice of software you would like if you win. This will save us a lot of time and ensure that you receive your prize quicker. Right, enough of this and onward we go...

Super Cycle - U.S. Gold

A bit silly this tip; but I'll bung it in anyway. At the start of a race, just leave the bike where it is. When the time runs out and the high-score table appears, you will be at the top! Thanks to A. Codling from Gravesend for that unusual little quirk.

Star Wars - Domark

Is there no end to R. Henderson's tips! If you are fed up wrecking your mouse on this smart conversion, then plug an auto-fire joystick in port 2 and turn it on. Now all you have to do is move the cursor. I mentioned others - well, this cheat also works on Warhawk and Sidewinder, in fact any game that scans both ports.

Platoon - Ocean

This is a real tough cookie. The jungle scene alone is enough to give anyone a nervous breakdown. Anyway, nervous breakdown or not, here is the lowdown on this difficult game-of-the-film, brought to you by yours truly.

Cheat:

- Type HAMBURGER-HILL (the - is the minus key on the numeric pad) on the title screen. This allows you to use the following keys:

- F1-F4 advance you through the jungle with F4 taking you straight to the village.

- F5/F6 switches on/off a shield and activates a message calling you a cheat! N.B. Do not enter trapdoor with shield or the game will crash.

Jungle and village:

With a bit of practice (not to mention the cheat!), the route for this level can be memorized. I'm not sure if it is a bug or not, but it is possible to be shot if the enemy is off screen. To combat this, turn the game's music off, and on hearing a shot, jump. The snipers hidden beneath trapdoors can be removed by a grenade, but this is slow and tricky so it is best

to just jump over them. Ammunition is quite plentiful so let off a volley of shots each time you enter a screen. Having placed the explosives on the bridge, if you wait beside the second bridge and shoot any soldiers who appear, a package will be deposited. Collect this and a hit point will be removed and your morale will go up.

On entering the village ignore the first three huts. Enter the fourth, making sure you shoot the hiding soldier. Search here and you will find a map of the tunnel system. Go to the last hut and search to the right of the sack of rice. You will find a torch. Enter the hut to your right and you will find a trapdoor. Go down and you will enter the...

Tunnel system:

Use the map on the right-hand side of the screen and only bother with the following rooms: The room at the top left-hand side of the map contains a geek captain. Shoot him and take the flares. Visit the rooms marked on the map and collect both the compass and the second set of flares. Then make your way to the exit (bottom right.). The only real tips I can give for this section are: keep moving and fire in short bursts as ammunition is scarce.

Bunker:

The flares are in limited supply so throw a flare. Shoot the approaching soldiers using short bursts of fire, taking out as many as you possibly can. It is possible to see them without using flares but this does waste bullets.

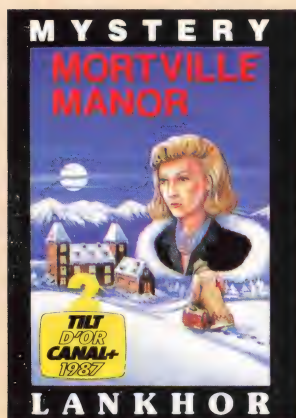
Second jungle:

Keep firing! Time is your greatest enemy here. The quickest route is left, right alternately. That's it really!

Sergeant Barnes:

Collect the box. And avoiding Barnes' deluge of bullets, keep throwing your grenades. Move in close, and before long you should be on your way home...





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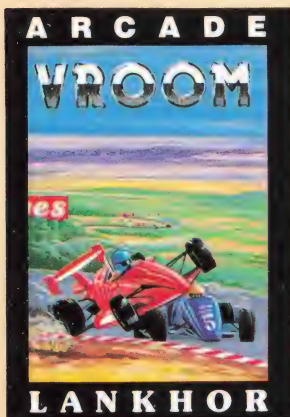
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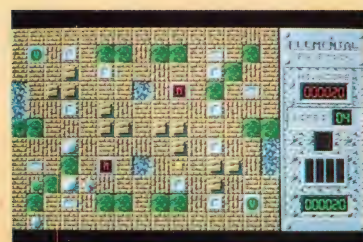
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Game with
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Pandora - Firebird

Daniel Messinger has really got stuck into this average arcade adventure and sent in these following tips. Cheers, Dan.

The chemist wants some Shakespeare, which is the LT. Comms quarters. Give it to him and he'll give you a syringe. Find the diabetic and give him the syringe. He will also want Insulin - get this from the security officer in exchange for the sonic blaster. Take Insulin to diabetic, give it to him and he'll give you some useful information.

When moving around, try to avoid the thief - he will take whatever you are holding. When you see him, blap him with the laser rifle.

Go back to LT. Comm's room and take his I.D. Hold it and walk into the Commander's room (the room to the left). Pick up the objects and leave, making sure you are holding the I.D. or you will die.

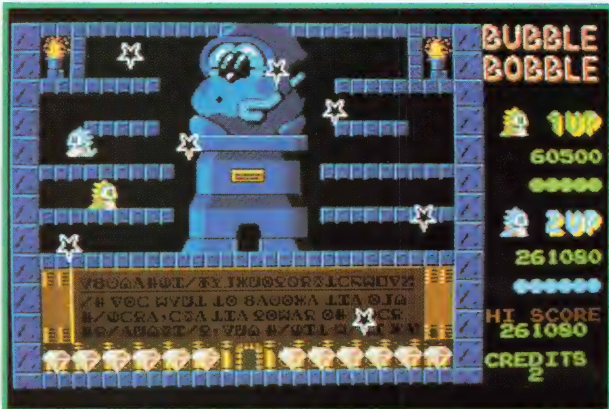
Avoid fighting droids or anyone unless you have to. Watch their movement patterns and sneak past them.

Characters:

- Bank manager - Kill him (makes sense!).
- Wacobrain - Watch out! Dangerous.
- Thief - Holds: gold key, sonic blaster and kryptonite.
- Priest - Very dangerous - holds a lethal photosabre. If you can get this it can be very useful.
- Hooligan - Holds mace - avoid.
- Secdroids - Avoid.
- Ice creature - Dangerous - holds themolance which is a very good weapon.
- Lord - Holds photosabre.
- Captain - Code white, SDI disk.

Bubble Bobble - Firebird

This tip was found out by someone in the office but I can't remember who! On losing your last life, keep holding fire down and a new set of lives will be yours, though your score will be reset. While I'm on the subject of this ever-popular conversion, MISS (yes a lady! Come on ladies, don't you play computer games?) S. P. Gulati from London asks: "How do you beat the big Baron on level 100?" Well, yours truly to the rescue! Jump onto the small platforms, collecting the green potion bottles. These potions allow you fire lightning bubbles, which are used by jumping down, alongside a wall, facing in the opposite direction from the Baron. Whilst floating, keep pressing fire and lots of little lightning bolts will rip into the Baron. After about a hundred he will become bubbled. Pop him immediately, and completion is yours!



Football Manager II - Addictive

Ta very much to Rob Nengerman from Holland, for these useful starting tips for this average sequel.

Take a team from the third division to start with. In the lower divisions always play with four attackers if possible (you can normally play with two midfield players to do so.), make sure you always train with every turn and, most important: ALWAYS SAVE THE GAME AFTER YOU HAVE WON. If there is a match you lose, simply load the last position and try again, perhaps with another system.

Livingstone - Alligata

A few of you couldn't get Kenton Bush's infinite lives cheat to work. If you were one of them, R. Henderson from Merseyside has sent in another which is accessed simply by typing C H E A T. Ooooh!!

Warhawk - Silverbird

Nick Gudegast from Cheshire, has sent in a quick tippette for this budget blast. Once the game has loaded, press the F3 and, hey presto! When you play the game and get to the blue blob which changes the sound of your ammo, it'll give you fast continuous firepower without having to keep fire pressed. Ooh!

Gunship - Microprose

This is a brilliant sim. If you still want to cheat, but can't be bothered to type in Mark Lawrence's brilliant pokes from issue 2 (lazy so-and-so!), Greg Parsons from Nuneaton flies in to rescue you.

First choose a really easy mission and complete it. Then take an extreme mission on any of the levels. If you should die on any of them, wait until the screen tells you what happened (missing in action or killed in action) then reset the computer without pressing fire and continue the game. Now you will just accumulate score, medals, ribbons, chat show appearances etc...



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Little Computer Person Activision

I'm not so sure I should be printing this. I mean, does it count as murder?

Anyroad up, if you are bored with your present pet person, simply follow these instructions from M. Tillet of Lowestoft.

Open the folder called DATA and you will be faced by many files. Close the write-protect tab so it is enabled. Find the file HYBER and drag it to the trash icon, thus erasing it. Now load as normal, making sure the write-protect tab is enabled. After five minutes a new LCP should move in, and if you are STILL not happy with it, just repeat the procedure.

I must point out that I am in no way responsible for murdering all those little chaps. So if you want to do it, the risk is yours.

This was the first in the long line of horizontal scrollers, and is still good for the occasional blast now. Get over 50,000 and enter ">SHEFFIELD". Your ship is now invincible to enemy craft, but you can still die by colliding with a building or by running out of time. Ta once again to R. Henderson for that.



Strip Poker - Anco

If you wish to strip your opponent, but are useless at cards (then why did you buy the game?), view the disk from the desktop to see the files, and change "DONNA1" to something else (e.g. "DONNAONE"). Now change "DONNA6" to "DONNA1" and reboot. The game will now commence with poor Donna wearing nowt but a smile. Thanks(!) go to Andy Grossett from Guisborough, Cleveland, who sent that in. Also ta very much to Andrew Nash from Bristol, who sent in the same tip which apparently works on new Strip poker II+.

Gauntlet II - U.S. Gold

Direct from U.S. Gold themselves, comes this brilliant cheat routine for loadsahealth!

The cheat is hinted about by the between level message: "Locked treasure chests can insert helpful items". You will need two keys and two LOCKED treasure chests. As you



Ikari Warriors - Elite

Lots of people have sent in this tip. Too many to list, in fact. So, for anyone who fancies semi-invincibility, this is what you do. On starting, enter the first tank, and crash straight into the first pillbox. Now, quickly press "F1" to quit. Restart and do this again. Your tank will now be invincible, as will any tank entered hereafter.

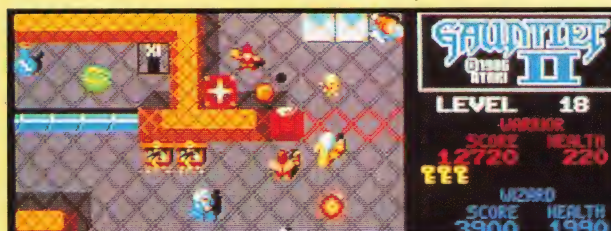
Captain Blood - Erratum

A slight blunder last month (Steve, your Pot Noodle allowance has been cut - Ed) caused much confusion amongst eager Captain Blood fans. The missing section of the tip is as follows: Once you have arrived at 'Sinox' and the robot asks you for the code, you should reply: 'Impossible not Sinox', and at the next prompt, reply incorporating the '1010' code into the answer.

Stir Crazy - Infogrames

If a big score is what you are after, then follow Cheeky (at least, I think that's what it said!), from Abbots Bromley, Staffordshire's advice. On the snoring level - six - go to the top left snorer and nudge him three times. Work your way down doing this and then across. Avoid the slop bucket, and get back into your bunk. If you do this correctly, then your % will go back up to 100. Repeat this once BoBo is awakened and you can go on forever.

open the first chest hold down the 'HELP' key. Having collected the treasure, open the second chest whilst holding the 'INSERT' key. As you unlock the second chest, an ank (the symbol of life.) should be revealed. Collect this, and a gong will sound, you should now have 50,000 health points, and 32,000 reflective super-shots! The reflective shot will vanish if you leave the level, and if you pick up an amulet, the counter will reset to ten shots. This cheat mode can be re-activated at any time.



Sierra Quest tips

Having received a deluge of letters requesting help with Sierra's Quest games, Sierra Guru, Nick Clarkson, has compiled a number of tips which will help adventurers everywhere.

Police Quest

"I can't get rid of Sweet Cheeks" - Phone 411 and ask for the cab company's number. Ring them and take Sweet Cheeks to the front of the building, where a taxi should be waiting.

"Where do I get the transmitter pen from?" - After the first game of cards you will need to phone the station to arrange a back-up team. When they arrive, walk towards the officer wearing the black shirt and type: 'give me the transmitter pen'.

"How do I deal with the bikers in the wine bar?" - You will need to take your PR-nightstick with you. At the first moment of trouble, type: 'attack biker with nightstick'.

Leisure Suit Larry

"How do I get a bottle of wine into the casino's honeymoon suite?" - When in the honeymoon suite, turn on the radio and listen to the adverts.

"I seem to be a little tied up, how can I get free?" - should you have waited by the 24-hour Kwikimart, you may have noticed an Asian gentleman stroll by. Try giving this old Boy Scout some liquor, and he might just perform his good deed for the day.

"Faith won't budge an inch, how can I get her to move?" - High up on a windowsill you may have noticed a small bottle. Use the technique described in the magazine to retrieve the bottle, and then try to move Faith.

King's Quest III

"Where is the key to the wizard's cabinet?" - For some reason the cunning old wiz has decided to hide it on top of his wardrobe.

"How do I kill the mean old wizard?" - After collect-

ing the porridge from the three bears' house, you must make a magic cat cookie. Crumble the cookie into the porridge and give it to the hungry wizard.

"I can't seem to get any spells correct, why?" - You must follow the spell book's instructions word for word. Turn to the appropriate page and type in the exact instructions that are in the manual. Make sure you have all the necessary ingredients.

Space Quest II

"How do I cross the swamp?" - Having collected the berries, rub them over yourself and then enter the swamp.

"Where can I find a light source?" - In the middle part of the swamp, towards the back of the screen, there is a deep area. Hold your breath and dive down to reveal an underwater cave.

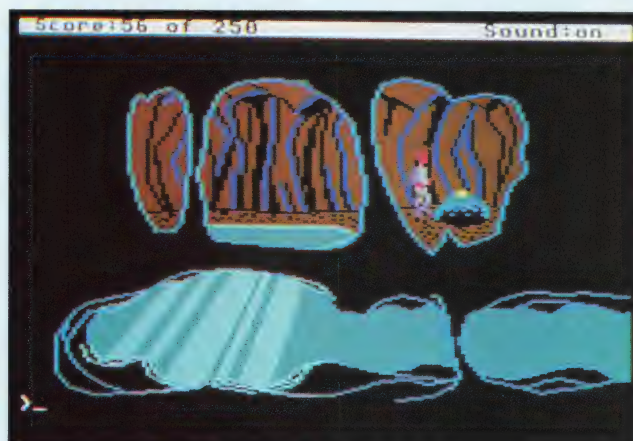
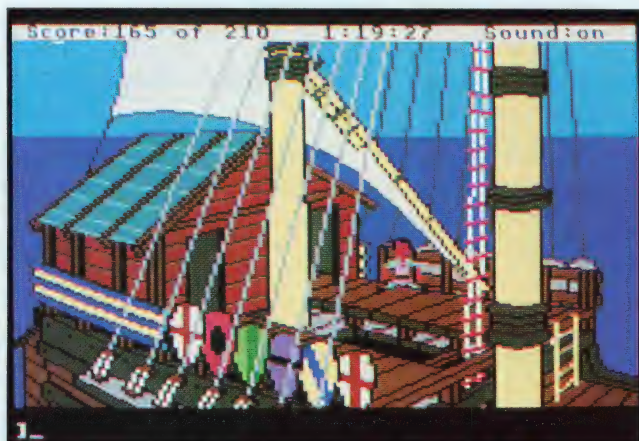
"I can't see in the labyrinth beneath the little-pink people's valley?" - Make sure you picked up the gem after falling into the valley. When in the tunnel system, hold the gem in your mouth.

Adventure Help

If you're really stumped with an adventure game, then help is at hand; send any questions or problems in writing to:

The Dungeon,
29 Blackthorne Drive,
Larkfield,
Maidstone,
Kent.
KE20 6NR

The Troll can't reply to your letters personally, but the Dungeon staff will compile an adventure help feature which will appear in ST Action every month. With some input from the ever enthusiastic ST Action readers, this could turn out to be a life-saving guide to ST adventuring - so get writing now!



Where are you?

Right, before I disappear, could the following people please contact me in reference to their prizes: Richard Nellist, Kenton Bush, M. Jordan, Steve P.

For his useful Pandora tips, Daniel Messenger, from Whilton receives a copy of Bionic Commando. But R. Henderson from Liverpool, please get in touch, so that we can work out a prize. Thanks very much and see you next month. Steve

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UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE MK 2 FOR HISOFT & ST BASIC

```

10  REM ***** Universal Cheat Routine Mark II *****
15  REM ***** HiSoft / ST Basic *****
20  OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(256):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30  DEF SEG=0: REM Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
40  X=CHEAT:READ B
50  WHILE B<>99999
60  POKE X,B:X=X+2
70  READ B
80  WEND
90  REM This code is common to all cheat routines. Type in this listing
100 REM and save it for future use. To use a cheat routine replace the
110 REM lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.
120 DATA &h601a,&h0000,&h0180,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000
130 DATA &hffff,&h487a,&h00e6,&h3f3c,&h0009,&h4e41,&h3f3c,&h0007,&h4e41,&h4267,&h487a,&h00f7,&h3f3c
140 DATA &h004e,&h4e41,&h41fa,&h00f2,&h3018,&h00fc,&h0006,&hd0c0,&h4267,&h2f08,&h3f3c,&h003d,&h4e41
150 DATA &h3f00,&h487a,&h01ca,&h2f3c,&h0000,&h8000,&h3f00,&h3f3c,&h003f,&h4e41,&h4fef,&h000c,&h3f3c
160 DATA &h003e,&h4e41,&h4ff9,&h0007,&hfff0,&h4dfa,&h01a8,&h41ee,&h0038,&h43fa,&hffa0,&h7013,&h32d8
170 DATA &h51c8,&hfffc,&h32fc,&h4e75,&h243c,&h0000,&h0200,&h262e,&h0002,&h0483,&h0000,&h0044,&h41ee
180 DATA &h001c,&h43ee,&h0060,&h6100,&hff78,&h206e,&h0002,&h4dee,&h001c,&hdlce,&h43ee,&h09e8,&h2288
190 DATA &h4eae,&h0352,&h4eae,&h008e,&h4eae,&h00e0,&h4eae,&h01d2,&h41fa,&hff54,&h200e,&h9088,&h916e
200 DATA &h0260,&h916e,&h0232,&h916e,&h02b8,&h41fa,&hfe40,&h2f48,&h0004,&h4eae,&h01fe,&h4eae,&h025a
210 DATA &h43e9,&h001c,&h41fa,&h003c,&h3018,&h5340,&h2458,&hd5c9,&h3498,&h51c8,&hfff8,&h4eae,&h028c
220 DATA &h1b45,&h496e,&h7365,&h7274,&h2067,&h616d,&h6520,&h6469,&h736b,&h2061,&h6e64,&h2070,&h7265
230 DATA &h7373,&h2061,&h206b,&h6579,&h002a,&h2e2a,&h0000
310 REM *****
320 REM The following code is game specific. These are the lines
330 REM of code that must be altered to provide cheats for different games.

```

HISOFT & ST BASIC Cheat data - Infinite lives for VIXEN

```

350 REM ***** Infinite lives and time for Vixen
355 REM ***** HiSoft/ST Basic data for use with Iniversal Cheat II
370 DATA 6,0,1700,&h4a6e,0,8456,&h42b9,0,8564,&h42b9,0,12720,&h42b9,0,8570,&h6010,0,8462,&h6008
390 DATA &h4155,&h544f,&h5c41,&h2e50,&h5247,&h0000,99999
400 BSAVE "VIXN_CHT.PRG",CHEAT,512

```

HISOFT & ST BASIC Cheat data - Infinite lives for THUNDERCATS

```

350 REM ***** Infinite lives and time for Thundercats
355 REM ***** HiSoft/ST Basic data for use with Iniversal Cheat II
370 DATA 5,0,16620,&h4a79,0,17282,&h4a79,0,3838,&h4e71,0,3840,&h4a79,4,29060,&h4a79,&h4155,&h544f
380 DATA &h5c54,&h4855,&h4e44,&h4552,&h2e50,&h5247,&h0000,99999
400 BSAVE "TCAT_CHT.PRG",CHEAT,512
410 REM The file ceated by this cheat program should be placed in an AUTO folder if using an ATARI 520.

```

HISOFT & ST BASIC CHEAT ROUTINE FOR PLATOON

```

10  REM ***** Cheat routine for Platoon *****
15  REM ***** HiSoft / ST Basic *****
20  OPTION BASE 1: DIM A%(512):CHEAT=VARPTR(A%(1))
30  DEF SEG=0: REM Remove this line if new ST Basic is in use
40  X=CHEAT:READ B
50  WHILE B<>99999
60  POKE X,B:X=X+2
70  READ B
80  WEND
90  REM Type in this listing and insert a blank disk in drive A.Now RUN
100 REM it to produce a file CHEAT.PRG. Quit out to the desk top and double
110 REM click on this file. When prompted insert the Platoon disk and hit
120 REM a key. Platoon game should now load as usual but you will have
130 REM infinite ammunition, morale and hits on all levels, plus infinite
140 REM time on level 3.
150 REM *****
160 DATA &h601a,&h0000,&h0158,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000,&h0000
170 DATA &hffff,&h70ff,&h4267,&h2f00,&h2f00,&h3f3c,&h0005,&h4e4e,&h487a,&h0116,&h3f3c,&h0009,&h4e41
180 DATA &h3f3c,&h0007,&h4e41,&h4267,&h487a,&h012b,&h3f3c,&h003d,&h4e41,&h3800,&h4df9,&h0005,&h0000
190 DATA &h2f0e,&h2f0e,&h3f04,&h3f3c,&h003f,&h4e41,&h3f04,&h3f3c,&h003e,&h4e41,&h41fa,&h000e,&h3d7c
200 DATA &h4eb9,&h0048,&h2d48,&h004a,&h4ed6,&h347c,&h0140,&h43ea,&h0080,&h307c,&h00c0,&h700f
210 DATA &h20c9,&hd3fc,&h0100,&h0000,&h51c8,&hfff6,&h21ca,&h00d8,&h41fa,&h0012,&h707f,&h24d8,&h51c8
220 DATA &hfffc,&h11fc,&h0038,&hfa17,&h4e75,&h48e7,&h8080,&h41f9,&h0001,&h5000,&h303c,&h4a6e,&h0c68
230 DATA &h87fe,&h000a,&h6600,&h0024,&h4268,&h0e12,&h4268,&h1fac,&h3140,&h0302,&h3140,&h0332,&h5340

```

Continued...


```

240 DATA &h3140,&h04f0,&h3140,&h053e,&h3140,&h10ce,&h6000,&h003e,&h0c68,&h7fd8,&h000a,&h6600,&h001e
250 DATA &h3140,&h1020,&h4268,&h0d38,&h4268,&h0de2,&h4268,&h12f8,&h4268,&h1de0,&h4268,&h1e78
260 DATA &h6000,&h0018,&h3140,&h9b4c,&h5340,&h3140,&h0db8,&h3140,&h133c,&h4268,&h0ddc,&h4268,&h1168
270 DATA &h4cdf,&h0101,&h2f38,&h0118,&h4e75,&h48e7,&h40c0,&h41fa,&hfffa,&h2208,&h4841
280 DATA &hec49,&h037c,&h0100,&h2f70,&h1000,&h0008,&h4cdf,&h0102,&h4e75,&h1b62,&h0149,&h6e73,&h6572
290 DATA &h7420,&h506c,&h6174,&h6f6f,&h6e20,&h6469,&h736b,&h2061,&h6e64,&h2070,&h7265
300 DATA &h7373,&h2061,&h206b,&h6579,&h006c,&h6f61,&h6465,&h722e,&h6269,&h6e00,99999
400 REM *****
410 BSAVE "PLATOON.PRG",CHEAT,512

```

UNIVERSAL CHEAT ROUTINE MARK 2 FOR FAST BASIC

```
RESERVE CHEAT, 512
X=CHEAT:READ B
WHILE B<>99999
    {X}&=B:X=X+2
READ B
WEND
```

```
REM This code is common to all cheat routines. Type in this listing
REM and save it for future use. To use a cheat routine replace the
REM lines of code in this program with those in the new listing.
```

```
DATA $601A,$0,$180,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$FFFF,$487A,$E6  
DATA $3F3C,$9,$4E41,$3F3C,$7,$4E41,$4267,$487A,$F7,$3F3C,$4E,$4E41,$41FA,$F2,$3018,$C0FC  
DATA $6,$D0C0,$4267,$2F08,$3F3C,$3D,$4E41,$3F00,$487A,$1CA,$2F3C,$0,$8000,$3F00,$3F3C,$3F  
DATA $4E41,$4FEF,$3,$3F3C,$3E,$4E41,$4FF9,$7,$FFF0,$4DFA,$1A8,$41EE,$38,$43FA,$FFA0,$7013  
DATA $32D8,$51C8,$FFFC,$32FC,$4E75,$243C,$0,$200,$262E,$2,$4483,$0,$44,$41EE,$1C,$43EE  
DATA $60,$6100,$FF78,$206E,$2,$4DEE,$1C,$D1CE,$43EE,$9E8,$2288,$4EAE,$352,$4EAE,$8E,$4EAE  
DATA $E0,$4EAE,$1D2,$41FA,$FF54,$200E,$9088,$916E,$260,$916E,$232,$916E,$2B8,$41FA,$FE40,$2F48  
DATA $4,$4EAE,$1FE,$4EAE,$25A,$43E9,$1C,$41FA,$3C,$3018,$5340,$2458,$D5C9,$3498,$51C8,$FFF8  
DATA $4EAE,$28C,$1B45,$496E,$7365,$7274,$2067,$616D,$6520,$6469,$736B,$2061,$6E64,$2070,$7265  
DATA $7373,$2061,$206B,$6579,$2A,$2E2A,$0
```

```

*****
REM *****

```

```
REM The following code is game specific. These are the lines
```

REM of code that must be altered to provide cheats for different games.

FAST BASIC MK 2 Cheat Data - Infinite lives for VIXEN

REM Infinite lives and time for VIXEN

REM Fast Basic version

DATA 6,0,1700,\$4A6E,0,8456,\$42B9,0,8564,\$42B9,0,12720,\$42B9

DATA 0,8570,\$6010,0,8462,\$6008,\$4155,\$544F,\$5C41,\$2E50,\$5247,0,99999

```
BSAVE "vixn cht.prq",CHEAT,512
```

FAST BASIC MK 2 Cheat Data - Infinite lives for THUNDERCATS

REM Infinite lives and time for Thundercats.

```
REM Fast Basic version.
```

DATA 5.0,16620,\$4A79,0,17282,\$4A79,0,3838,\$4E71,0,3840,\$4A79,4,29060,\$4A79

DATA \$4155, \$544F, \$5C54, \$4855, \$4E44, \$4552, \$2E50, \$5247, \$0, 99999

```
BSAVE "tcheat.prg",CHEAT,512
```

```
REM The above file must be placed in an auto folder if you are using an ATARI 520ST.
```

FAST BASIC CHEAT ROUTINE FOR PLATOON

```
REM ***** Cheat routine for Platoon *****
```

RESERVE CHEAT.512

```
X=CHEAT:READ B
```

WHILE B<>99999

$$\{X\} \models B : X = X + 2$$

READ B

WEINID

REM Platoon cheat - does not use the universal cheat routine.

```
REM Type in this listing and insert a blank disk in drive A: Now RUN
```

```
REM it to produce a file PLATCHT.PRG. Quit out to the desk top and double
```

REM click on this file. When prompted insert the Platoon disk and hit

Continued...


```
REM *****  
DATA $601A,$0,$158,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$0,$FFF,$70FF,$4267  
DATA $2F00,$2F00,$3F3C,$5,$4E4E,$487A,$116,$3F3C,$9,$4E41,$3F3C,$7,$4E41,$4267,$487A,$12B  
DATA $3F3C,$3D,$4E41,$3800,$4DF9,$5,$0,$2F0E,$2F0E,$3F04,$3F3C,$3F,$4E41,$3F04,$3F3C,$3E  
DATA $4E41,$41FA,$E,$3D7F,$4EB9,$48,$2D48,$4A,$4ED6,$347C,$140,$43EA,$80,$307C,$C0,$700F  
DATA $20C9,$D3FC,$100,$0,$51C8,$FFF6,$21CA,$DB,$41FA,$12,$707F,$24D8,$51C8,$FFF6,$11FC,$38  
DATA $FA17,$4E75,$48E7,$8080,$41F9,$1,$5000,$303C,$4A6E,$C68,$87FE,$A,$6600,$24,$4268,$E12  
DATA $4268,$1FAC,$3140,$302,$3140,$332,$5340,$3140,$4FO,$3140,$53E,$3140,$10CE,$6000,$3E,$C68  
DATA $7FD8,$A,$6600,$1E,$3140,$1020,$4268,$D38,$4268,$DE2,$4268,$12F8,$4268,$1DE0,$4268,$1E78  
DATA $6000,$18,$3140,$9B4C,$5340,$3140,$DB8,$3140,$133C,$4268,$DDC,$4268,$1168,$4CDF,$101,$2F38  
DATA $118,$4E75,$48E7,$40C0,$41FA,$FFFF,$2208,$4841,$EC49,$307C,$100,$2F70,$1000,$8,$4CDF,$102  
DATA $4E75,$1B62,$149,$6E73,$6572,$7420,$506C,$6174,$6F6F,$6E20,$6469,$736B,$2061,$6E64  
DATA $2070,$7265,$7373,$2061,$206B,$6579,$6C,$6F61,$6465,$722E,$6269,$6E00,99999  
REM *****  
BSAVE "PLATCMT.PRG",CHEAT,512
```

```
REM Infinite lives for SidewinderREM Fast Basic version for the Universal cheat routine Mk 1
REM as published last month.
DATA 1,0,$5B22,$4A39,$6175,$746F,$5C6D,$6169,$6E2E,$7072,$6700,99999
BSAVE "SCHEAT3.PRG",CHEAT,256
```

```

290 REM **** Infinite lives for Sidewinder - HiSoft / ST Basic
300 REM **** For use with the Universal Cheat routine Mk 1
305 REM **** - as published last month
310 DATA 1,0,&h5b22,&h4a39,&h6175,&h746f,&h5c6d,&h6169,&h6e2e,&h7072,&h6700,99999
460 BSAVE "SIDEWCHT.PRG".CHEAT.256

```




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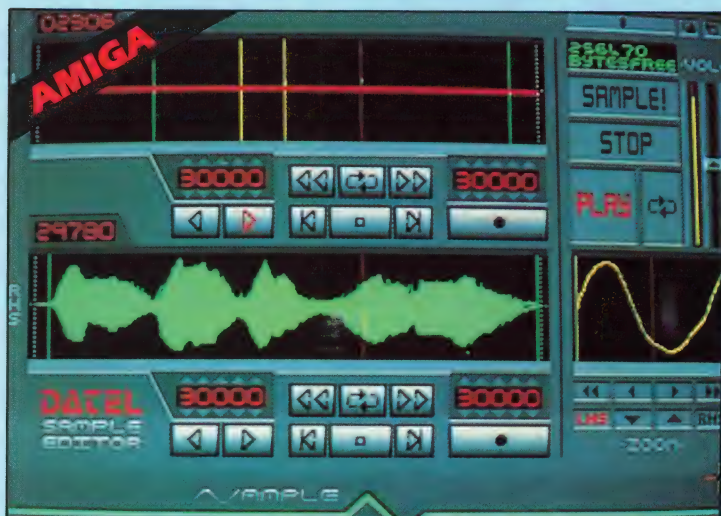
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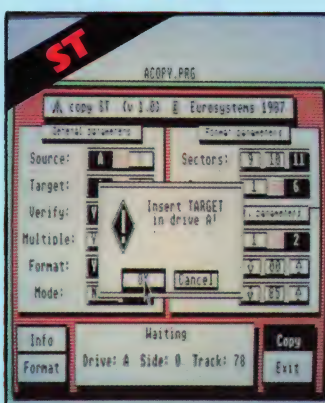
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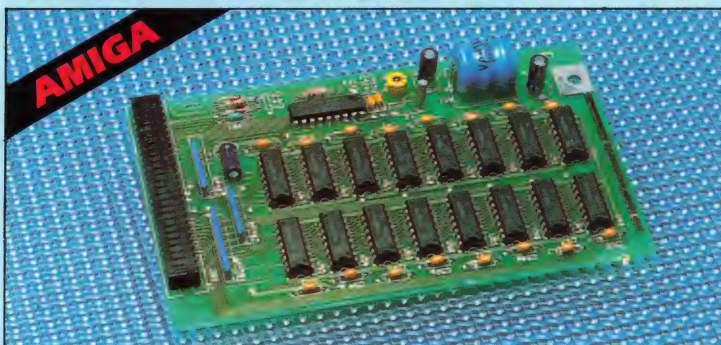


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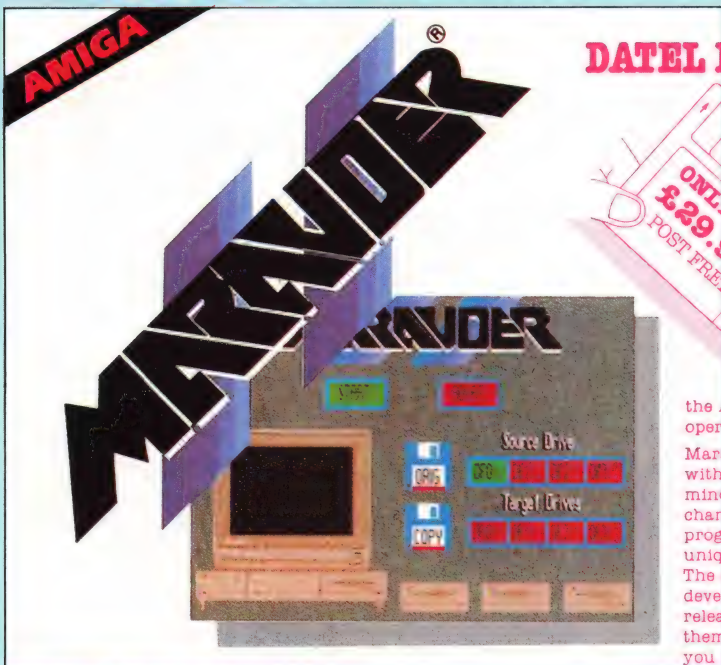


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STAI

STA
Rating
75%

GRAPHICS: 83%
SOUND: 48%

ORIGINALITY: 83%
ADDICTIVENESS: 69%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 850



VIRUS

FIREBIRD (£19.95)

"When ST Action contacted me to say that they had Virus, I avoided the office for a fortnight until I discovered that it was the latest release from Firebird!"

The smoothness of the graphics is absolutely incredible; the filled terrain scrolls smoothly and everything has been taken into consideration - you even reduce trees to charred stumps if you collide! The ship's controls are tricky to master, but when proficiency is gained, amazing aerobatics can be performed. Gameplay itself is good and to erase the virus will require a lot of skill. In the past I have moaned about the lack of originality in shoot'em-ups, but with Virus I have no such qualm. Need I say more?

SM

Veteran computer game campaigners will immediately associate the name David Braben with the classic mercenary-in-space game called Elite. But more recently, he has been involved in his own project on the Archimedes computer, called Zarch. Firebird jumped at the chance of marketing Zarch for the ST, but they were unexpectedly confronted by copyright problems and the name had to be changed. Considering the theme of the game, Virus is a much more fitting name, and it is certainly more memorable than Zarch. Your task is to protect a planet which is under siege from invading aliens, who are waging the most foul and contemptible form of attack, chemical warfare. This chemical contains a

destructive and deadly virus which can be identified by the vibrant red residue it leaves on the areas that it has infected.

Your mission is to intercept the invaders and stem the flow of the virus. The game screen displays the graphics which have been described as 'innovative', showing the so-called Hoverplane sitting on the launching pad. This craft can be controlled by mouse, joystick or keys, but most effectively with the mouse. The Hoverplane moves by thrust propellant, similar to the craft in Asteroids. But the pentagonal-shaped and top-heavy Hoverplane is even more difficult to control and very unforgiving to error. The mouseball move-

ment controls the direction of the craft, but due to its own inertia and the lack of directness from the mouse, the Hoverplane tends to lag behind. Clicking the left-hand mouse button activates the thrust propellant and clouds of red residue wafts from an exhaust at the base of the Hoverplane. The attitude and position of the craft is directly linked to the mouseball and moving the mouse can turn the craft to face in any compass direction. For instance, pushing the mouse upwards causes the nose of the craft to rise and sends it in the corresponding direction.

As the Hoverplane gains altitude, the



terrain disappears at the base of the screen and you are placed in a relatively safe space environment, where you can monitor the enemy's activities on a long-range scanner. This map shows the virus creeping across the terrain and the position of the Hoverplane relative to enemy spacecraft. Plotting a course to an infected area and turning off the thrust enables the craft to descend under the pull of the planet's gravity. Monitoring the craft's descent on a sliding-bar altimeter and with the thrust technique mastered, you can sweep down, confront the aliens, and move back up to the safety of space.

The Hoverplane has one front-mounted laser cannon which is activated with the right-hand mouse button, but a penalty point is given against you every time you use this weaponry. The enemy attack in waves and constantly deposit the destructive virus on the terrain. These variform craft include Seeders which sweep across causing widespread contamination. But they cause even more damage when they land and concentrate their attack on trees, which turn into mutant foliage. The Drone is a fighting craft which protects its virus-spreading comrades, while Mutant Drones pursue and attack your craft with great fervour. Meanwhile, Bombers sweep across the area and deposit large consignments of the virus in parachute bombs, which explode

above the ground like a Napalm attack.

As your clean-up crusade progresses, the alien ranks swell with Pests, which certainly live up to their name by badgering the Hoverplane and making irritating twittering noises, and Fighters, which are equipped with a powerful arsenal. Each type of alien craft makes its own eerie noise and the confusion of sirens and twitters adds to the frantic atmosphere of the game. As the virus takes over the land, you will have to concentrate your fire on mutated foliage and remove it, like



Critics expected Telecomsoft to do little more than revamp their eight-bit budget software range for the ST. But after Starglider, Sentinel, Star Trek and now Virus, I would say that was a gross misjudgment! I wonder whether the red virus idea was inspired by the foul red weed from War of the Worlds? Certainly the ghostly sound effects are very similar! Graphically, Virus is indeed one of the most innovative games I have ever played and gliding over that undulating, patchwork landscape is just like looking out of an aircraft window. The opposition appear even more real and fearful by their solid, 3D appearance and they attack with great intelligence with their eerie attack sirens blazing.

JS



Get involved in a dogfight with the enemy (above), or release a homing missile if you've got one spare (right).



gangrenous flesh, from the landscape. Meanwhile, the attacking aliens deal their trump card, in the form of an Attractor craft which can sap the Hoverplane's energy with a powerful tractor beam. The Attractor requires a number of hits before it is destroyed and so it is often wise to hover up to the stratosphere to escape the tractor beam. The most fearful foe is the unknown, and in this game it is a mystery craft that may attack at any time to put an abrupt end to your clean-up campaign. Your score is automatically accumulated and a number of factors are considered to arrive at a final amount which is given at the end of the game. These include

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the alien craft that you have intercepted, economic use of weaponry and the amount of terrain that you have protected from the virus.

STA

The first thing you notice about this are the graphics - they really knock your eyes out! The movement of the "patchwork" landscape is utterly realistic and, when control of the ship is mastered, brilliant effects, such as skimming the water, can be performed. But having said that, control of the ship is very difficult and may prove just a little too trying for some people. This would be a shame as they would be missing out on one of the most revolutionary new games of the year.

NC



Explore the undulating landscape, and discover other enemies, intricate coastal regions and to your horror, infected patches of land.

MOONBASE

ATARI (14.99)



Once again Earth's infallible defence system has failed. The authorities are in disarray, as they realise the weapons they controlled are now being directed against them. The reason for the fault is an ore deficiency in the superconducting circuits, a fault that can be rectified by a mineral-extraction mission to the moon.

The game is split into

three sections, the first of which involves the collection of the ores. You must land at the moonbases, collect the ores and take them to the orbiting mother ship. The amount of ore needed to ensure quality varies on each mission. A gauge showing the percentage needed is given, but going over the required level can easily upset the delicate balance. If this were not a difficult

enough task, you must also contend with the computers' defences not to mention rogue asteroids.

Having transferred all the ore to the mother ship, you dock and prepare for level 2 - the journey home. You have a hundred seconds in which to guide the ship back to earth. If possible, you must follow the marked trajectory; this is easier said than done, due to the constant barrage of floating mines and cosmic storms. After a while the Earth's gravitational pull speeds your descent, this must be slowed by firing your retro-rockets. If you fail to do so, your

landing will be too harsh and you will crash.

If, by a sheer miracle, you make it home, just one final task must be completed - docking. A timer counts down as you fly horizontally towards the docking clamps. Damage here is fatal, so care is of paramount importance. If successful, you are rewarded with a bonus. The mission is not complete though, all three sections must be completed another three times, and on each occasion the time allotted gets shorter.

Although, the missions are varied and well implemented, the game's lasting appeal is sadly lacking, and the final nail in the coffin is the £19.95 price tag. This is possibly for the younger player, due to its simplistic gameplay, but I feel even they would prefer something a bit racier.

asterly direction I soon located a cocooned scientist. Waving pathetically from his jelly-like confinement, the prisoner

STA Rating 44%

GRAPHICS: 44%
SOUND: 40%

ORIGINALITY: 49%
ADDICTIVENESS: 41%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 3900



B.D.T.A.

ELECTRA (£19.95)

"Although there are many Space Invader clones, the copyright for the original could be difficult to obtain. But that doesn't stop some enterprising companies from getting close to the original concept, but with the addition of a daft scenario."

Better Dead than Alien features Brad Zoom, a space hero, and your mission is to wipe out waves of aliens as they appear in the battle zone. First, you must endure the loading screen which shows the faces of the programmers poking their tongues out and wiggling their ears - it's almost funny! Taito afforded the luxury of colour with strips of plastic stuck on the screen, but it looks like Electra have mastered the art of coloured graphics. The first wave of alien

attackers enter the first screen. This strange squadron consists of sixteen lesser aliens who are little more than laser fodder to the experienced Invader player. These aliens advance very slowly, fire cumbersome weaponry and occasionally, a lone Kamikaze will break from the pack and, advance down the screen. The mouse can move your small defending craft anywhere on screen and the control is responsive. Initially, you are equipped with a single-shot weapon which is activated by pressing the left-hand mouse button and maintaining pressure on the button turns it into a repeater.

A message at the end of the first attack-wave warns of an imminent danger from a superior alien. The screen appears with an empty battle zone, then a set of alien-like tentacles wriggle at the top and a large mass enters the screen. The number 25 signifies the amount of direct hits which are required to eliminate this large alien, as it drifts down emitting small missiles, while numerous small defender craft buzz around protecting their large but vulnerable protege. The large alien will try and whip your craft and damage its shield protection and so it is best to let it disappear down the bottom of the screen and resume the attack as it appears at the top again.

Another batch of alien craft await on the next screen, but their attack is more aggressive than the first squadron's. A constant Kamikaze attack ensues as the

Taito made millions out of Space Invaders and the game turned many teenagers into square-eyed, computer-game addicts. When it comes to game addiction, blasting advancing aliens is a winning formula and Better Dead than Alien is no exception. The mouse controls are terrific and there are enough surprises and special features to maintain your interest in the game. This is what I call absorbing arcade entertainment!

JS

I liked the look of this from the previews, as it seemed to lampoon all the other shoot'em-ups.

But when it arrived in the office it was obvious the humour was all it had going for it - and even that wears after a while, leaving nothing but a way-below-average blast'em game.

I can find little to recommend about this. Humour is very hard to recreate in computer games and this is a perfect reminder of that.

SM

rest of the bunch advances slowly down the screen. An alien is at its most vulnerable and valuable when its eyes glow green and blasting a greeny releases a power capsule which must be intercepted and absorbed before it drops to the bottom of the screen. A panel of customized weaponry icons at the right of the screen illuminate individually, and as a capsule is absorbed, your single-shot cannon could change to a Laser Scatter Bolt, Auto Repeat Saturation Blaster, Armour Missile (which can wipe out an entire rank of aliens with one shot) or a Clone Ship that confuses the aliens and doubles your firepower. Another warning that a superior alien is waiting on the next screen prepares you for the next attack. Suddenly, an ugly green toad with big red eyes floats into view and things do not seem so serious. A direct hit takes a meaty chunk out of the alien's flesh and slowly, bit by bit, he disappears. Another batch of laser fodder is superseded by a belt of Asteroids which must quickly be blasted into dust. Then another squadron of those confounded little aliens present themselves on screen after the asteroid attack and this is again followed by another large alien - I think you can get the gist of the game by now!



**STA
Rating
52%**

**GRAPHICS: 47%
SOUND: 43%**

**ORIGINALITY: 50%
ADDICTIVENESS: 58%**

**DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: 39065**

LEGEND OF THE SWORD

RAINBIRD (£24.95)

"With a fighting force of mutated humanoids at his command, the evil wizard, Suzar, has plunged the Kingdom of Anar into a state of fear. Only a warrior armed with the legendary sword and its accompanying shield have any chance against the hellish hordes. The secret resting place of these magical weapons is now forgotten, but someone must seek them out and unravel the Legend of the Sword."

Come the dawn you, and your band of five companions will be put ashore from the good ship, Lady Juville, to brave the terrors which now roam the woods and countryside of the enslaved land. Trolls, humanoids and monsters of every description are to be found above and below ground. There are ruined castles, shacks, cellars and tree-top hiding places to explore. This wonderful concoction of wizard's brew has been tossed in a basket of dreams and stirred with a large spoonful of magic.

Upon your arrival at the island you may select one of three landing sites. Each site contains its own particular problems, but inevitably you will need to find a passageway between the locations. Just as in real life, your merry band contains some individuals who are not quite as merry as you would wish. Having politely asked a

companion to carry out a request, you may find he will still refuse. At this point you will need to bring all your considerable powers of leadership and persuasion into play, and punch him until he understands that you're serious! Unlike other games

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Superior graphics, but you've got to be careful when playing the game. I liked this game, particularly the mixture of graphics, use of the mouse and text - the story line isn't too shabby either. I would, however, sound a word of warning: don't rely on using the mouse and pull-down menus to do this game. The accompanying booklet states as much, but it is very easy to get into the habit of using the mouse to issue commands so that you miss important details. You also wouldn't use the command parser to its full extent.

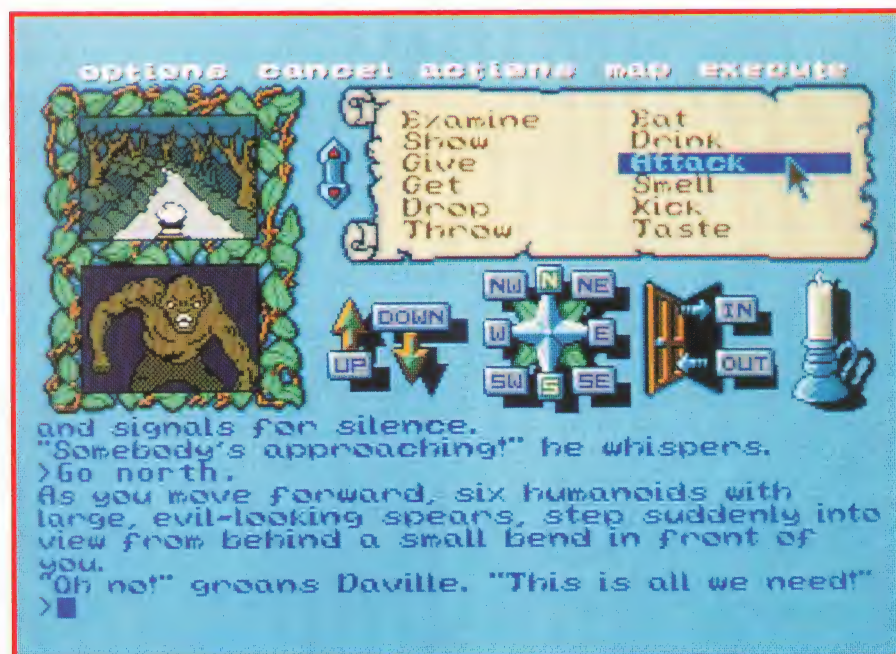
I have a soft spot for adventure games that are amusing and some of the replies given are quite amusing. Have a look at the credits, then try shouting and, if you want to live dangerously, kick the captain. Hope you can swim.

SK

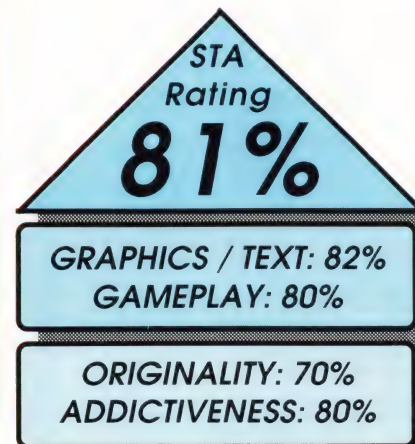
which involve companions, this game makes only little use of your crowd of hangers-on and they tend to just get in your way.

The text used is a mixture of the traditional fantasy style, heavily laced with modern witticisms. In an effort to impart the true feeling of an adventure the game does more than respond with an 'OK' when replying to your commands. In reply to 'Go North' the game might produce the following reply. "With Daville leading the way, you urge the men into the entrance of the cave whilst keeping a careful watch on the bats which circle overhead". Both the text and the graphics can be extremely bloodthirsty, which means the blood and gore explode from all directions when the action starts.

The screen layout is a novel concept which includes two cameo graphic screens, one showing your surroundings and the other showing the object or person you are interacting with. What these graphics may lack in size they certainly make up for in number and detail. There are 350 illustrations and they are generally well done. The third, large central window may either be used to display the com-



Legend of the Sword features a novel icon driven system complete with menu, two graphics windows, directional control icons, a text window and a multi-purpose window





The multi purpose window can be used to show a map of the immediate area which when clicked on enlarges to fill the entire screen and shows a greater area around the player. As you can see the quality of the graphics are up to the usual Rainbird standard.



monly used commands available, or a section of scrolling map. In the command mode you may select the words to be used via the mouse cursor or type them directly. When the map mode is selected you may choose to view the complete map of the area and this will fill the entire screen giving a panoramic view of the island.

Beneath the map window are the movement control icons. Directions from the Compass Rose: In, Out, Up and Down may be selected. The final icon is that of a candle which represents your life force slowly burning away. The woods abound with Melons, mangoes and mushrooms, but should you neglect to keep your gang properly fed and watered, you may just 'Snuff it'!

All the standard commands we have come to expect from a modern adventure are included, such as: Oops!, Ram Save, Goto location, Find object, Help and Recall last command. There is also the option to change both the background and text colours to a hue which suits your finer sensibilities. This last option is also saved with your save-game data which ensures that you need not repeat the setting-up procedure next time you play.

There are other characters out and about on the island and you may chat, cheat or thump them as you will. There are trolls infesting the lower caves and when they are not busy carting sacks of maggot-infested dung around their indescribably filthy living quarters, they are hiding in wait to sink a magical axe six inches into your

skull! Hunters, hermits, humanoids and leprechauns are also available for you to hobnob with, but keep your hand on your sword as they all tend to be a treacherous rabble.

Once you uncover a few of the island's secrets you will be able to either

move along the rivers which criss-cross the terrain or descend into the tunnels whose entrances pockmark the forest glades. Having entered the underworld, the map window will switch to show the unfolding passageways which riddle the island's bowels.

The introductory problems are of an easy-to-average standard which is a gentle introduction to the game. As the difficulty screw tightens you may find need to resort to the Help button which does on occasion give helpful suggestions. Generally speaking, the command parser is very good and most of the ideas you can dream up have already been anticipated.

Ploughing ever forward, you will gather enough snippets of information to find the hiding place of the sword and with its help return to settle the hash of the evil Suzar once and for all.

STA



If you are already an adventure fan or a newcomer who wants to see what a good adventure looks like, then look no further for your next purchase. Legend has brought together all the ingredients which make up a classic game and surrounded it with a sophisticated game control system. The most important aspect of any adventure is the setting of the difficulty level for the puzzles. This factor makes or breaks a game. I believe this game has got the mixture pitched just right for both the experienced and the novice player. There are certainly some puzzles which are tricky, but these are spaced far enough apart to give you the breathing space to enjoy the journey between. The text and storyline is such that you keep coming back for more. There are occasions when the humour tends to be out of keeping with the rest of the game, but no doubt it won't upset the younger audience. The game reeks of the hard work and polish which lives up to the Rainbird's Trademark. Highly recommended.

AM



BETTER DEAD THAN ALIEN COMPETITION

'This is the slimmest game I've ever played'

Electra have produced a Sony CFS 1000 3-piece radio cassette as the prize for their Better Dead Than Alien competition. This nifty little machine is guaranteed to blast your socks off, with FM, MW, LW and SW waveband radio, 2-way detachable speakers, 5-band graphic equalizer, Auto Music Search and a host more features.

Now, if you want to move to the groove, then just fill in the right answers to the question below and, who knows, you might be the lucky one who receives this fantastic prize. Send in your answers on the form provided to reach us at ST Action no later than 1st post, 9 September 1988.

1 - What character do you play in Better Dead Than Alien?

a) Brad Zoom b) Dylan Thomas c) Reginald Bosanquet

2 - At the end of the first level in Better Dead Than Alien, a large alien appears with long, waving tentacles. How many hits does it need to kill it?

a) 5 b) 25 c) 50

3 - What is Auto Music Search (AMS)?

- a) A function that allows you to search for your favourite radio station
- b) A function that allows you to jump to the next or previous song on cassette
- c) A function that helps you find the nearest place where a pop group is playing

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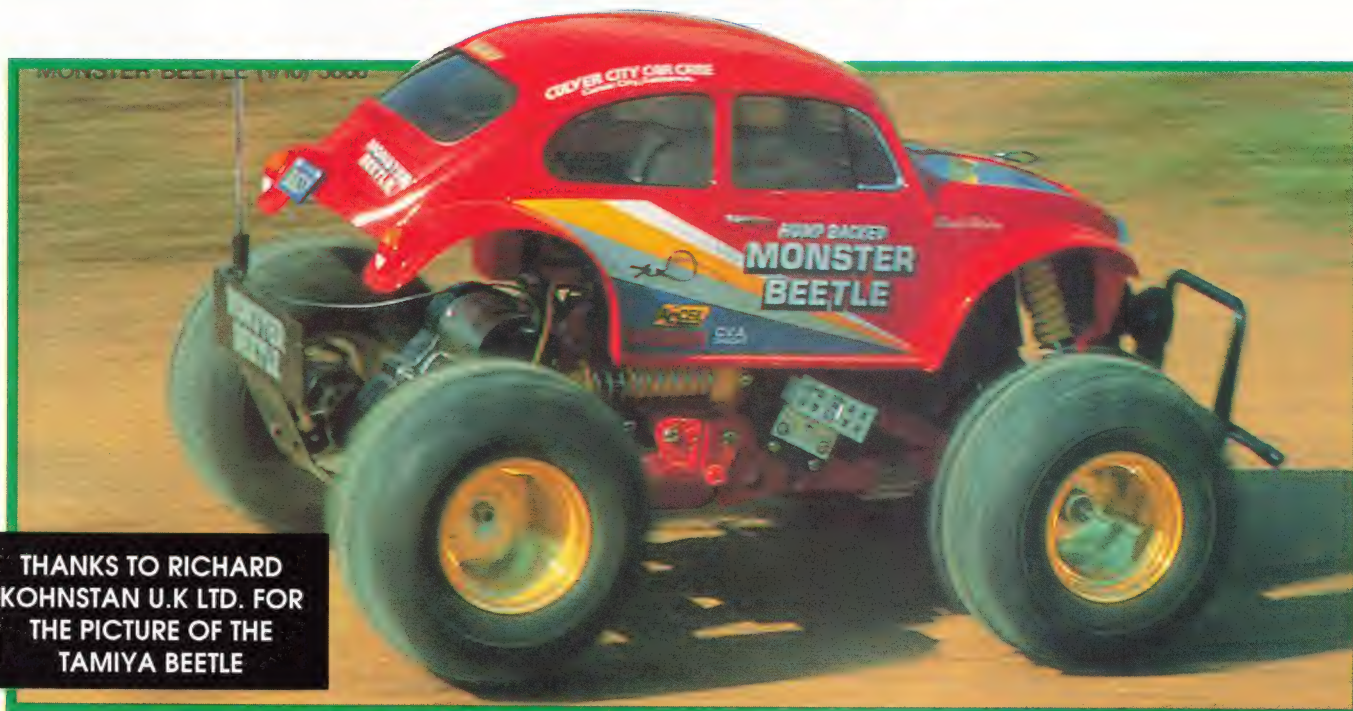
The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding competitions or the results of competitions. All prizes are offered believing them to be available. If, however, a prize is unavailable we reserve the right to substitute an alternative of comparable value. No cash alternatives will be given. Results will be published as soon as possible and prizes despatched as quickly as possible. Please refrain from phoning regarding competition results or prize delivery. Employees of Gollner Publishing Ltd and companies participating in competitions are not eligible to enter.

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THE PICTURE OF THE
TAMIYA BEETLE

Titus have come up trumps to promote their latest game, Fire and Forget, with a spectacular prize of a 1/10th scale Monster Beetle! Radio controlled and with rechargeable batteries, this Tamiya Off-Roader is just the thing to blast around the dirt. Everything about this Beetle is awesome - 41cm long, 29cm wide and with tyre size at a staggering 6cm width/ 13cm diameter, this monster gives you 4.5cm of ground clearance! Enough to extricate you from the most hazardous situations! Adjustable oil-filled shocks allow the Beetle to soak up must bumps. Included in the prize is the radio control unit and the Ni-Cad batteries, so you'll have all you need to start small-scale off-roading!

In order to stand a chance of winning this fabulous prize, just answer the following questions and send in your answers on the form provided to reach us here at ST Action no later than 1st post, 9 September 1988.

1 - What international charity uses the white dove as its sign of fighting against oppression in the world?

a) United Nations b) Amnesty International c) The Red Cross

2 - What is the name of the armoured vehicle used in Fire and Forget?

a) Sherman Tank b) Incinerator c) Thunder Master

3 - Titus' next release is to be titled:

a) Offshore Warrior b) Crazy Cars c) Shoot to Kill

ANSWER TO QUESTION 1:

ANSWER TO QUESTION 2 :

ANSWER TO QUESTION 3:

Name

Address

.....

.....

Post code

Daytime telephone number

ST Action Competition Rules:
The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding competitions or the results of competitions. All prizes are offered believing them to be available. If, however, a prize is unavailable we reserve the right to substitute an alternative of comparable value. No cash alternatives will be given. Results will be published as soon as possible and prizes despatched as quickly as possible. Please refrain from phoning regarding competition results or prize delivery. Employees of Gollner Publishing Ltd and companies participating in competitions are not eligible to enter.

Send entry to:
**Fire and Forget Competition,
ST Action, 10 Theatre Lane
Chichester, West Sussex
PO19 1SR**

"How did those clever chaps at Gremlin Graphics manage to squeeze an aircraft simulation in between coin-op conversions? And with a veritable hangarfull of air-sims already available, this has to be something a bit special to make an impact".

My kind of aircraft simulation is the sort that allows gung-ho arcade fans to enter straight into a combat situation without having to wiggle the flaps, check the oil and raise the under carriage, while the fussy purists carry out their rigorous tests and checks before even venturing on the runway. Your main task in this simulation is to locate and sink the Bismarck. This colossal German warship, which was 900 feet long and weighed over 50,000 tons, was set to rule the waves until its war service was abruptly ended in 1941. Night Raider simulates that famous and intrepid air attack which changed the Bismarck from an iron-clad warlord into a quivering wreck. After brief speech synthesis of Hitler and Churchill, you are presented with the option screen.

Selecting the full-blown simulation means that you have to follow the cockpit check on the conventional and recognizable instrumentation panel.

The cockpit window shows Ark Royal's runway, but before the aircraft



NIGHT RAIDER

GREMLIN (£19.95)

can take off, the instrumentation must be checked and the fuel mixed on the Engineer's screen, (rich for take-off and lean for flight). With the mouse, you place a cursor over the throttle knob, click the left-hand button and push the lever to its full extension. Then, ensuring that the Wing Lock is locked, you set the Arrestor to 'Up',

start the engines and return to the Pilot screen by pressing the '1' key. The takeoff is short and swift and as you near the end of the deck, pulling back on the yoke lifts the nose of the aircraft up. Once airborne, returning to the Engineer's screen enables you to alter the fuel mix for flight and pull up the under carriage.

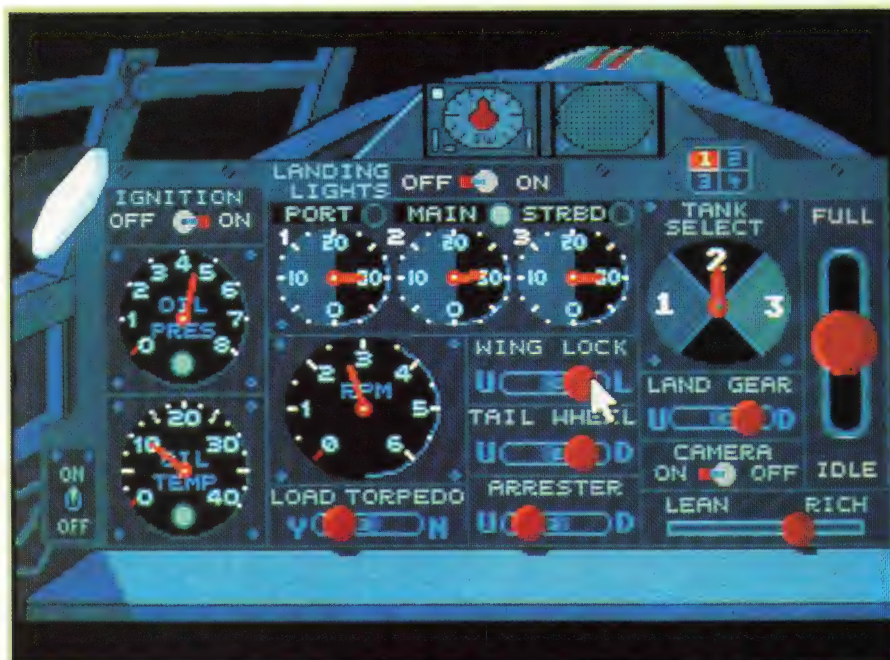
You lose all sense of direction in the night skies and so you must

"Chocks away chaps!". Gremlin Graphics have captured a real classic in the shape of Night Raider. Whilst not being a dedicated flight simulator, nor a simple out-of-the-cockpit shoot'em-up, Night Raider manages to capture the excitement of both formats.

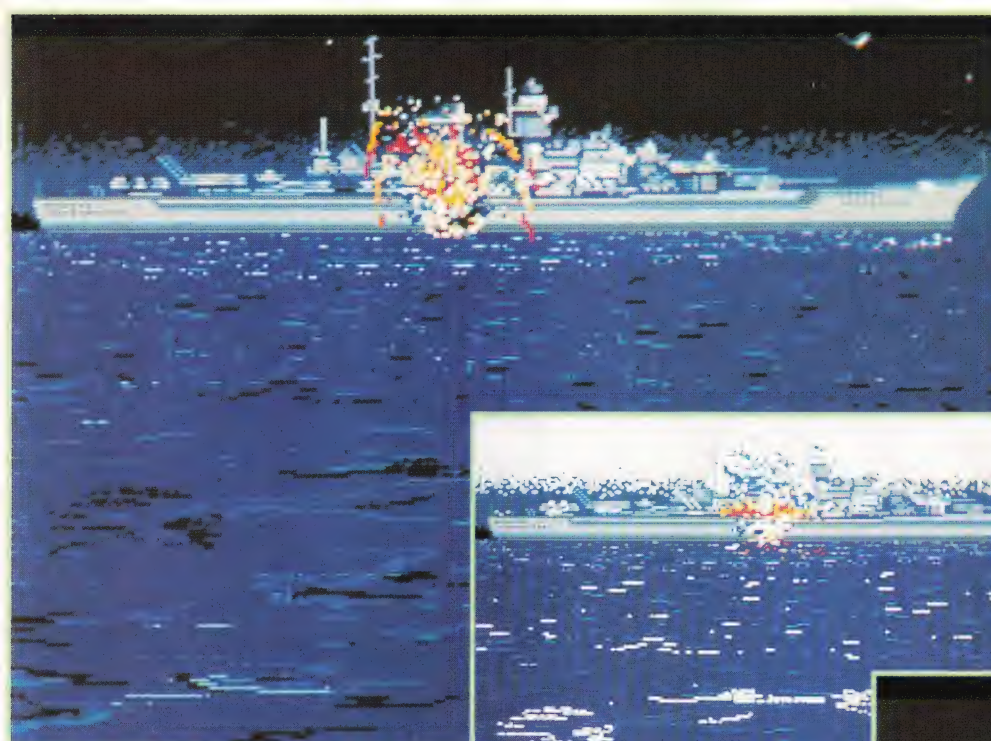
The sound effects, especially the digitized speech at the beginning of the game, together with the beautifully drawn graphics, help give the game a very convincing atmosphere.

Night Raider will undoubtedly provide a challenge for any would-be budding Biggles. Satisfaction is gained, not only from sinking the Bismarck, but also from laying waste the E-boats, U-boats, mines and Dorniers.

NC

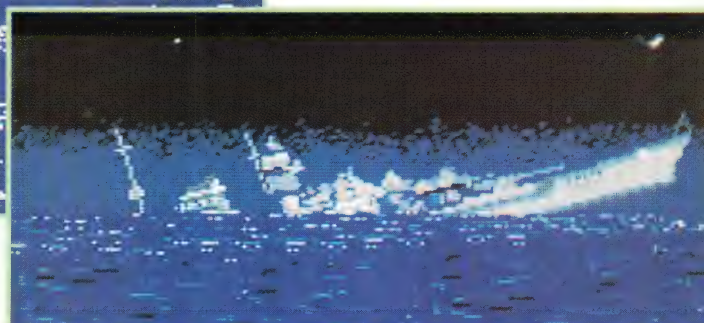


The Engineers' panel, just one of the many well drawn screens in Night Raider. Nearly all of the controls are functional.



After fighting your way through Dorniers, mines, E-Boats and U-Boats, and constantly checking your navigation, you will confront the Bismarck. Gritting your teeth you make the final approach, while flak bursts all around. Incessantly you will take hits and the plane will shudder, but all the time you must keep your cool, and aim true.

Drop the torpedo, and pull away just in time not to crash into the battleship. If your nerve didn't crack this is the sight you will see.



constantly check your position in relation to Ark Royal on the navigation screen. The occasional lights from shipping are the only outside indication of your altitude and position and so it is advisable to check your bearing on the compass and radar screen and return frequently to the aircraft carrier. The importance of cockpit equipment and your understanding of the instrumentation is emphasized during night flights, although illuminating the panel with a light switch during the mission

can give your position away to the enemy. Your airspeed indicator is shown in hundreds of mph and to increase or decrease your speed, the sliding throttle can be adjusted by clicking on the handle and dragging it with the mouse; again, the fuel mix must then be adjusted for the change in speed.

'Foxtrot Bravo 41, turn zero-four-zero and climb Angels one-five'. This game is excellent. The gameplay comes by the sackful. The action is thick and fast, but the controls are well laid out and, as a result, the game becomes more of a challenge. Graphics are nothing spectacular, but this does not seem to detract in any way from the game. The load-up sequence is amazing, and even if you don't buy the game, which you should, go and see the load-up at a shop NOW!

MM

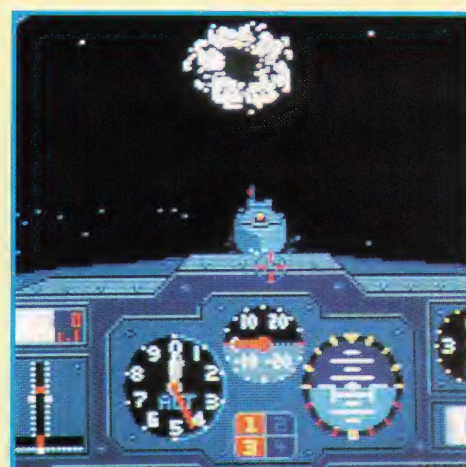
The largest presence on the Navigational monitor is the Bismarck. But Ark Royal has ventured into an area which is infested with U-boats and E-boats, and however valiant and majestic, the flagship of the British Navy is a sitting duck to the silent and swift German fleet. Suddenly, a squadron of enemy fighter planes appears out of the darkness and, as if somehow aided by the black back-cloth, these solid-graphic planes fly without a hint of jerkiness. The mouse activates both the yoke and the weaponry and clicking the right-hand



Tail-end Charlie's done sterling work here. Two Dorniers go down in flames, and I dare say the other two will go away with bees in their ears!



When attacking mines, fly slow and real low. Get them with short bursts of cannon fire, but watch your ammunition levels as unlimited fire is not a feature of Night Raider!



E-Boats and U-Boats tend to be tricky. Precise navigation is needed or you will fly straight past them and take many Anti Aircraft hits. Here, an E-Boat prepares to be scrapped.

Corrr, I like this one! Night Raider represents the sort of quality of entertainment that we should expect as 16-bit users. The simulation is accurate and yet playable and the combat and raid action is superb. The solid-graphic planes and vessels emerge from the blackness like spectres, creating an atmosphere of surprise, danger and excitement. Never have I played such an exciting aircraft simulation - a must for gung ho arcade players and purists alike!

JS

button puts you into combat mode. A set of cross-hair sights appear on the cockpit windscreen and clicking the left-hand button activates the machine guns. The Avenger was flown by a three-man crew and in their absence, you must undertake the tasks of the navigator, the gunner and the pilot. A view box informs you when your

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attention is required at a specific post.

The instrumentation light has given your position away and the cockpit becomes a blaze of light as the enemy shell-fire peppers the fuselage. The plane shudders violently, but she is still operational - just! You can choose either to relinquish flight control and switch to rear gunnery position and risk getting lost, or try and shake off the attacker. The position indicator is pleading with you to take control of the rear gun. The Tail Gun view reveals the rear attacker

and no time must be wasted in centering the sights on the plane and firing. As soon as the aircraft is eliminated, you must return to the pilot screen, make any alterations to the flight and continue with the mission.

Ensuring that you have sufficient fuel, you must re-locate the position of the Bismarck and check that the U-boats are not posing a threat to Ark Royal. Easing forward on the joystick sends the plane into a rapid descent, which must be monitored closely on the Altimeter. Flying at a low altitude at night is dangerous and the slightest pilot error will send the plane crashing into the waves, but it is necessary to keep below enemy radar. With skilful navigation, you should soon be on course and within striking distance of the target without arousing the enemy. With the aid of the inverted T-bar indicator and Artificial Horizon, you can check and correct the attitude of the craft as you prepare to attack. The targets seem awesomely solid and realistic - almost inhabited! Pressing the 'L' key makes ready the torpedo as you prepare to seal their doom. Suddenly, the enemy become aware of your approach and unleash a barrage of shell fire and so, pressing the 'L' key once more, releases the torpedo and pulling back on the yoke puts the aircraft into a climb, but the fleet is aware of your presence and with diminishing fuel levels you must return to Ark Royal.

Landing on the aircraft carrier is a tricky procedure and as soon as you are on course, you should turn to the Engineer's screen to prepare the aircraft for touchdown. As you approach Ark Royal, switching on the landing lights illuminates the runway. Now the speed and attitude of the aircraft must be monitored closely as you put the tail wheel, Arrestor and

STA Rating

78%

GRAPHICS: 75%
SOUND: 79%

ORIGINALITY: 72%
ADDICTIVENESS: 78%

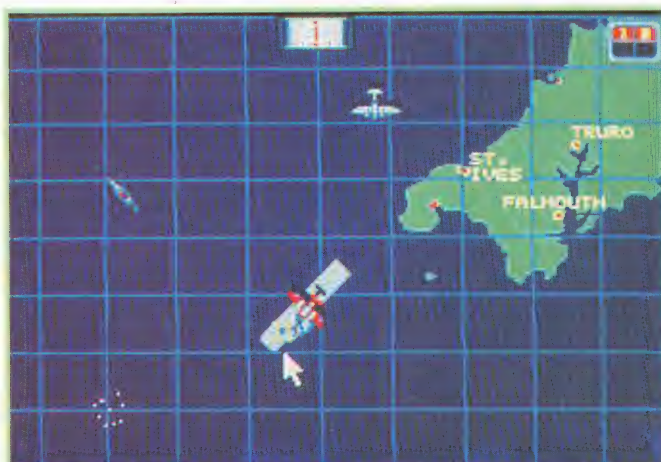
DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 12000

landing gear into the down position and ease up on the throttle until airspeed is reduced to 175 mph. Now you must return to the pilot screen to

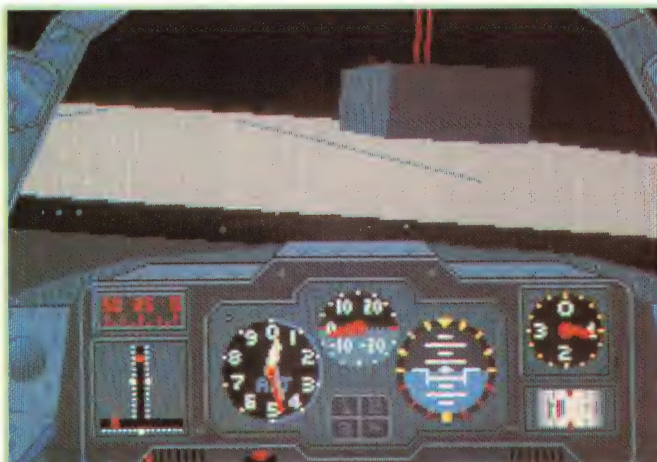


guide the aeroplane onto the landing strip and your Altimeter should be reading between 50 and 100 feet - if not, it should be reduced immediately. In the closing stages of the landing procedure, vertical descent should be no more than four feet a second. The aircraft hits the Ark Royals deck, and catches on the arrestor cable. The brake must then be applied, and the engines cut.

STA



Here you see the navigator's map which is essential for finding targets.



This is the view of the Ark Royal as you attempt a landing, got all your gear down?

BRAINBOX

CRL (£19.95)

Video trivia games seem to have been experiencing something of a revival recently. Many public houses now sport such machines as "Give us a break" or "Trivia Challenge", and these machines are frequently surrounded by screaming hordes clamouring to read the questions so they can be the first to shout the, normally incorrect, answer. And so, ever quick to hitch a ride on a successful bandwagon, CRL are the first company to bring such cultural activities to ST owners.

The game is supplied on two disks, the first being the master program and the second containing hundreds of nonsensical questions - leading me to believe that CRL may be releasing further questions at a later date. The game layout is that of that old classic, Noughts and Crosses, and is played

against the computer. The computer randomly places a number of subjects, including, leisure, art, books, sport, history and the irregular pot luck which selects a random question from the aforementioned categories. The first question is designated by the computer, and is set against a ten-second time limit. You choose your answer from the four given by using the 7, 8, 9 and - keys on the numeric pad. If you are correct you will win a "cross" on the board and the chance to pick the next subject, but if you are incorrect the point and the subject choice goes to the computer. The ultimate aim of the game is to get three crosses in a row - a la "Noughts and Crosses", and if you do so, you progress onto a slightly harder set of questions, and so on. Throughout the game some poor digitized speech tells



you both the subject chosen and, afterwards, the victor.

As trivia games go, this is one of the best; better even, in my opinion, than Domark's official effort. As well as that, it has all the atmosphere of the originals seen in pubs; this can be enhanced by having your friends blow smoke at you and press the incorrect keys! Definitely one that will appeal to all you closet trivia buffs.

STA
Rating
58%

GRAPHICS: 47%
SOUND: 38%

ORIGINALITY: 56%
ADDICTIVENESS: 62%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 4000

If there were ever a prize for the most unusual computer-game star, there would be hundreds of varied entries: Moles, Bubbling Brontosauri, Paperboys and Marbles. But none of these are anything like as weird (or as obnoxious) as Chubby Gristle - the sadistic Car Park attendant.

Chubby hates his job, and can only find solace in food. One day, after a particularly trying afternoon, Chubby decides he has had enough, and is going to eat continuously - his

CHUBBY GRISTLE

GRANDSLAM (£19.95)

ultimate aim - to tip the scales at one ton!

Any ex-8-bit owners will instantly recognise the format the game takes, as it is laid out very similarly to Gremlins' old "Monty" series. There are twenty-one screens, and each screen is choc-a-bloc with nasties, objects (e.g. cars), and,

more importantly, food.

All the nasties follow set patterns, and learning these is the key to success. Chubby begins his journey with four lives and must avoid falling too far, and contact with any of the screen's inhabitants. All of the wandering nasties - Frantic Housewives, Vandals, and Traffic Wardens - are people Chubby has had a go at, so they are just itching for a chance to get revenge on the portly tyrant.

If all the food and objects in one level are collected, you will progress to a more difficult set, such as a trip to Sainsbury's, a few pints at the Pose and Frown and, finally, to Chubby's favourite cafe, where they actually use a shovel to feed him!

If Chubby should

fail, he will be sent to his certain death - The Health Farm. But if he is successful, his lovely wife will cook him his favourite food, and afterwards have the chance to make some little Gristles!

The graphics are small but colourful, and the sound is average, with the tune beginning to grate very quickly. The game itself is quite difficult at first, but when you have memorised the nasties' movement patterns, the screens become a doddle, and interest wanes. This will appeal to anyone who yearns for an ST version of "Monty Mole", but for such a small game, I think this is very overpriced.

STA
Rating
54%

GRAPHICS: 50%
SOUND: 50%

ORIGINALITY: 44%
ADDICTIVENESS: 59%

DIFFICULTY: HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 5000



"Computer games are an excellent substitute for driving racing cars, piloting jet fighters and jousting in medieval tournaments - in effect, the sort of experiences, sports and pastimes which would not normally be accessible to the majority of people. But surely it is as easy to play real darts as it is to buy Mastertronic's World Darts?"

WORLD DARTS

MASTERTRONIC (£9.95)

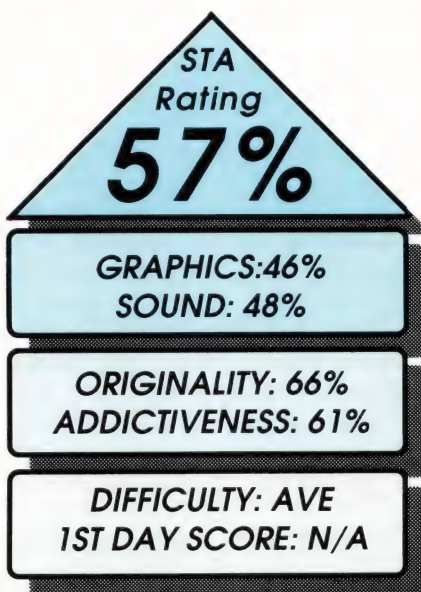
So you think you can throw good arrows? 'Wonderful, Great, Smashing!' But the proficiency you have gained down the pub will be of little use to you in computer darts, as it is a completely different board game. Mastertronic have provided the standard world-class darts tournament of 501 and you can pit your darts prowess against the special qualities and idiosyncracies of eight world-class darts players. The 'aim' of the game is to score 501 points by throwing darts at a standard board. The maximum you can score is 180, a now infamous score which is as equally difficult to attain in this game as it is in real life. The standard world-class rules state that you must finish with a double number and so the real skill of the game is to leave a number at the end that can be obtained with a double. To help with the calculations, Mastertronic have included a table which calculates three darts leaving the final one with a double. Therefore, if you are left with 167, you should try for a triple 20, a triple 19 and a bull.

The matches are played over a series of rounds and the first task is to select the computer-controlled player. It's match time and the screen displays a dartboard and a blackboard to keep score. The announcer appears at the base of the screen wearing a tasteless dinner jacket and says the only speech synthesis in the game: 'Player One!' You are in position at the Ocky and a hand holding a dart appears on screen and moves backwards and forwards in preparation for the throw. The amount that you have to throw appears beneath the chalkboard and, naturally, it is best to try for high numbers at the beginning of the game. The movement of the joystick is directly linked to the hand, although for added realism and difficulty you only have limited control. As

you manipulate the joystick, the hand initially moves towards your chosen target and then drifts away uncontrollably. Relinquishing your hold over the hand sends it drifting across the screen and you can never hold it completely still. The skill is to wait for the rare moment that the hand moves over your chosen target and then quickly

press the firebutton to release the dart.

After you have thrown your three darts, the computer chalks up your scores



and works out the remainder. The screen changes to show your computer-controlled opponent throwing his darts in a tournament environment and, again, the computer chalks up his score and the announcer appears on screen to call you up

Darts is a good idea for a computer game, and I am surprised that no-one has tackled it before. Originally a respectable 8-bit budget title called "180", Mastertronic have given this the Arcadia treatment and ruined it in the process. Graphics are above average, and the jaunty sound befits the game nicely - you actually see the organ player when the opposition throws. The control method is a little too imprecise, and this makes accuracy nigh on impossible. Not a bad game, but the execution lets it down. Go down the pub and play the real thing - it would be a lot more fun.

SM

Darts is a bit of a daft theme for computer simulation, but Mastertronic have executed it very well. The game moves along at a brisk pace and so there is no waiting around to throw your arrows and the difficulty of aiming the darts at the board has been well represented. Finally, the larger-than-life northern announcer is a nice comical touch - this is a slickly presented package!

JS

to the ocky again. The blackboard shows how many you have to score and a box beneath the board suggests which numbers to try for. You begin the game in the quarter-final stage and if you eliminate the first player, you move on to the next leg of the competition.

STA

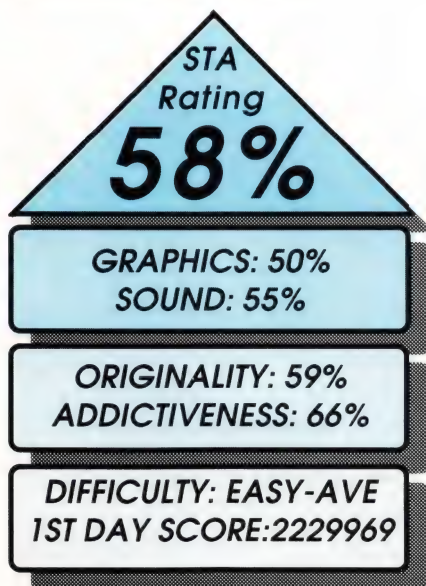


Your throwing hand wanders drunkenly in front of the board - perhaps you've had one pint too many before the game!

Now Titus have released a game not a million miles from U.S. Gold's next big licence, Roadblasters. Coincidence, or clever marketing?"

Thunder Master is the very latest in armoured vehicles. Devised by robots, it is equipped with all essential gadgets: four-wheel drive, the very latest in unjammable missiles, and a powerful V16 engine. An optional extra available is a second gun which flies above your vehicle, doubling firepower.

Once you are seated in your vehicle, the fun really starts! Viewed from behind the vehicle, the roads, often branching into two, scroll towards you in the fashion favoured by most of the available car games. Each level is governed by a set distance and to complete a level you must simply collect enough fuel to carry on your mission or your vehicle will fall into the enemy's hands.



score: 186661 high: 2491923 speed: 111 time: 81 bonus: 18180

fuel: [fuel gauge]

FIRE AND FORGET

TITUS (£24.99)

On completion of a level, a bonus is awarded for the number of fuel cones collected and the red sector on the world map will be replaced by a white dove. Completion of all six sectors wins the

The game is a good mixture of racing and shooting, and the whole thing plays at a rapid pace. Graphics are adequate, but the animation is poor with the enemies lurching past.

The game is a bit too easy, and I feel it wouldn't take a seasoned gamer long to complete. Not bad, but I don't think I would part with my hard-earned cash for something with as little lasting ability as this.

SM

game. But do not fail, as yours is the last attempt to save Earth from a nuclear war. Take to the roads, and FIRE AND FORGET...

Fire and Forget is certainly an improvement on Titus' previous release, *Crazy Cars*. Again the game possesses the same high quality graphics, albeit spoilt a little by the jerky animation.

Crazy Cars' major fault was its difficulty and, unfortunately, *Fire and Forget* goes to the other extreme. This factor, however, does not matter too much, as the game itself is very enjoyable.

Fire and Forget is an obvious improvement on *Titus'* first release. I can only hope that they will continue to improve their software at the same rate and perhaps, move away from this staid format.

NC

"They're lean, mean and ridiculously prolific! There are enough gungho, rapid-firing commandos immortalized in pixels to reconstruct the Normandy landing! Do we need another hero?"

BIONIC COMMANDO

GO (£19.95)

Structurally, Bionic Commando could be described as a traditional multi-level platform game and far removed from the usual Commando style that we are used to. But what is bionics? Anyone over the age of sixteen will vaguely remember the Bionic Man being fitted with artificial limbs after a nasty plane crash and as a result of his new parts, being destined to run around in slow motion for six series and countless repeats of The Six Million Dollar Man. Inspired by this, Go equipped their commandos with one bionic arm, which quickly

proves to be jolly useful in this game. The scenario describes how a once peaceful race of people have become oppressed by a bunch of naughty aliens who take pleasure in decimating the countryside. To the peace lovers, this is taking oppression

an unusual alien welcoming committee. Unannounced, the bionic commando parachutes down the screen and, using the joystick, you can direct him to a suitable branch and land. Equipped with potentially fatal weaponry, the aliens waste no time in demonstrating their contempt for the bionic do-gooder and you must try and stem the flow of troops that infest the forest with your somewhat cumbersome weaponry. The

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too far and so they commission the bionic commandos to infiltrate the alien complex and kick ass. The game is divided into five separate levels which lead through the only accessible route to the alien headquarters. The game begins in the Dying Forest and the screen displays a complex of trees which conceal

joystick directs the commando in the normal fashion until the firebutton is depressed, which can activate the weaponry or attach the bionic arm. Effective use of this arm is the key to success in this game and, with the firebutton depressed, wrenching the joystick upwards or to the left and right, launches the

extending bionic arm in the corresponding direction. The hand adheres itself to the



At long last, Go! have managed to lure a respectable game into their stables. Capcom's Bionic Commando may have been obscure in the arcades, but with both U.S. Gold and Software Creations (who incidentally programmed the huge hit, Bubble Bobble) behind them, Go! cannot fail to make some waves within that huge sea of games.

I found Bionic Commando rather Ghosts'n'Goblinsque. The graphics, while being somewhat small, were detailed and well drawn. Controlling the commando became a little tiresome, especially when the little fellow's bionic arm failed to hit its mark. The constant tune, despite being quite catchy, soon forced me to decrease my monitor's volume setting.

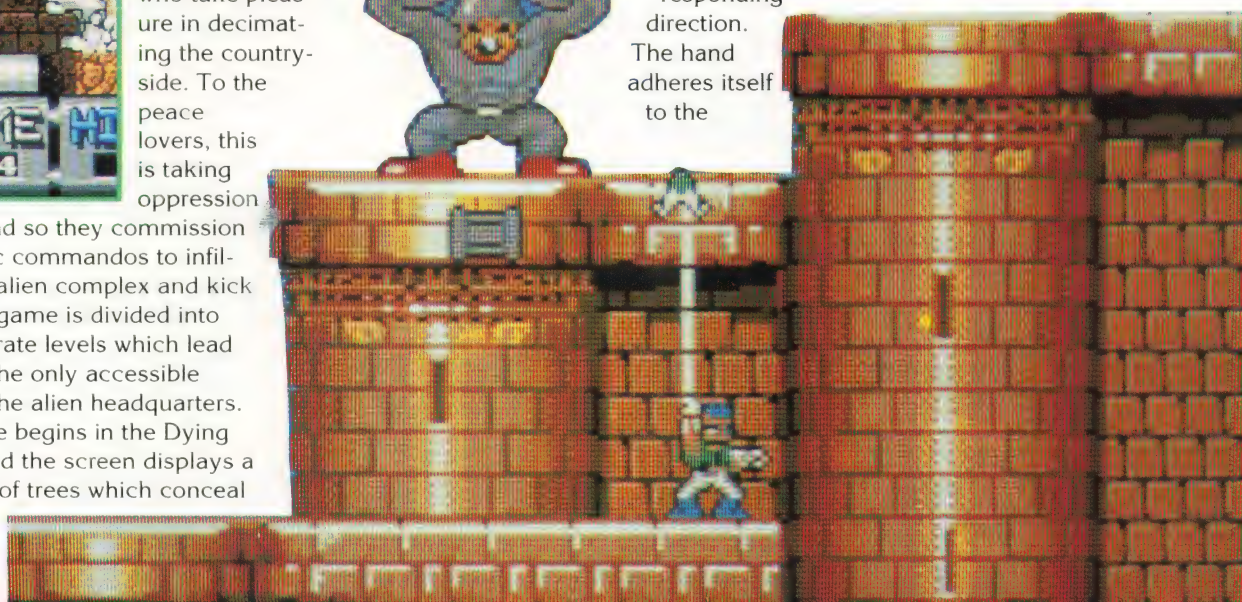
Bionic Commando will undoubtedly help enhance Go!'s reputation, although I wasn't overly impressed.

NC

The title of this game suggests that the Go! label is failing to fulfil its promise of 'Originality first and foremost'. But even a cursory glance at Bionic Commando reveals that it does not conform to the usual Commando game criteria. This is platform game-play at its most infuriating and the bionic arm is a stroke of genius!

JS

branches and you can make him swing and release his grip by relinquishing pressure on the firebutton. The majority of the aliens are mere cannon fodder, but larger aliens are equipped with ropes and grappling hooks and can chase you around the trees with apelike agility. In addition to



To avoid the hazards (below), up goes the bionic arm, and you're out of danger (right) - or is this a case of 'out of the frying pan, and into the fire'?



the alien threat, killer bees inhabit the lower branches while a squadron of flying creatures add to your problems at the top of the trees.

Out of the thick of the forest the next task is to infiltrate a castle, under which lies the very nerve centre of the alien oppressors. After negotiating a tricky passage across the drawbridge, which is ardently defended by cannon fire from the castle turrets and ram-parts, the commando must be steered around a complex of electrical wires and the slightest contact results in electrocution. As a last-ditch attempt to stop the bionic commando from infiltrating the castle, the aliens stoop to an all-time low and send out Kami-kaze troops who are laden with explosives. Meanwhile, more intelligent members of their race hurl large objects with great zeal from the castle

ceiling.

The aliens have sealed off all routes to the nerve centre, except for the sewer system which is infested by vile sewer creatures and defence droids, and only the most concentrated effort will get you through to the nerve centre. A missile is poised for launch and no time must be wasted in blasting the lock on a door which protects the control room. Within the nerve centre, helicopters hover above the commando and drop a consignment of bombs, while the ranks of cannon fodder are increased to impede your progress to the missile silo. Negotiating a safe path around

On hearing the news that GO! were to convert this little-known coin-op, I was a little apprehensive. The conversion was commissioned to Software Creation (who converted Taito's Bubble Bobble) who, thankfully, have done the game justice.

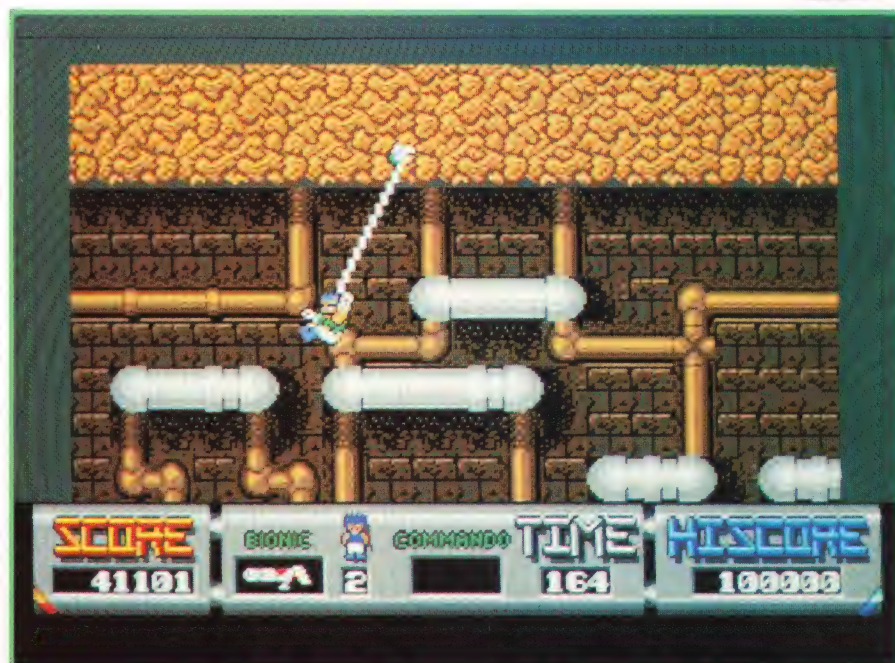
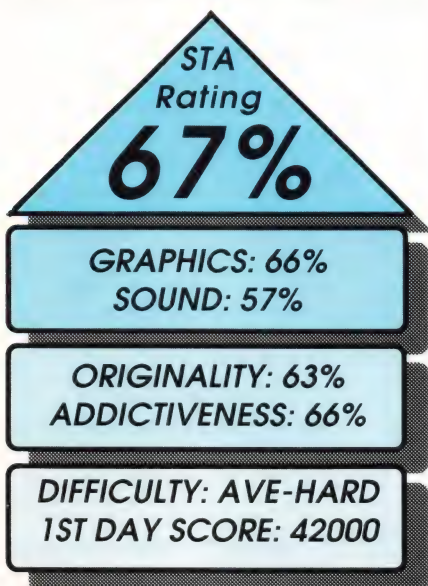
Everything from the coin-op is present, and the graphics are spot on - the stomping robots on level 4 are superb! The five tunes are varied but tend to grate after a while.

All in all, a very close conversion. If all the Go!/Capcom licences are as close as this, then roll on Tiger Road!

SM

the stomping machines, the commando must enter the silo and stop the imminent missile launch.

STA



Sweeping through the later levels, swinging on that handy bionic arm.

"There are games and there are games. Nearly every arcade game is available on a computer, either in its original form or in an instantly recognizable cloned title. "Super Mario Brothers" was one of the rare exceptions to this rule, until now!"

GREAT GIANA SISTERS

GO (£19.95)

As with many other "cute" games "The Great Giana Sisters" is based around a rather strange storyline. The gameplay basically involves the night-time antics of little Giana, a pretty little thing from Milano. Now, apparently, one night when most normal people were far away in the land of Nod, little Giana started to dream of a very strange land: a place where gravity had loosened its grip; a land filled with grottos, castles and frightening monsters. Everyone occasionally experiences weird dreams, but poor little Giana found herself stuck in hers. Somehow she knew what she must do. Somewhere within the strange and dangerous world was a huge magical diamond and only after finding this precious stone could poor Giana leave her mysterious dreamworld. She would have to hurry - school starts early on the continent.

After loading, during which the screen shows Time Warp Software's

Are "The Great Giana Sisters" related to the "Super Mario Brothers"? It is certainly obvious from where Time-Warp software got their game's concept. "The Great Giana Sisters" is a well-produced, colourful, cute, musical and magical journey into the dreamworld of two little girls. Whilst being both challenging and frustrating to play, it is also fun and enjoyable. The sisters will undoubtedly be a hit. I can only feel sorry for the postman who will have to deliver the sack-loads of tips we will receive.

NC

melting disk logo, the game's title is boldly scrolled on the screen. By manoeuvring the joystick, either a one-player or a two-player game can be selected, the second contestant taking on the role of Giana's little sister Maria, another captive of the strange dreamworld.

It is when the action starts that the player first notices the striking similarities between "The Great Giana Sisters" and Nintendo's "Super Mario Brothers". The basic object of the game is to complete the thirty-two levels, collect the magical diamond

"Impossible Mission 2" used to be my favourite game. But it has now been ousted by this brilliant "Super Mario Brothers" clone. There is so much in it to discover. It retains all of SMB's cheats and mystery bonuses as well as presenting some of its own. Graphics are first class, and the cutesy tune that accompanies complements it perfectly. This will appeal to just about anyone, and will give weeks, if not months, of enjoyment. Well, what are you waiting for? Go and buy it!

SM

Great Giana Sisters is set across thirty-two platform levels, riddled with diamonds and various oddball nasties.



and leave the fantasy world. A number of fiendishly laid-out levels have been designed to test little Giana's jumping skills, and as if that were not enough, the programmers have decided to include a number of meanies whose favourite food just happens to be little girls. "The Great Giana Sisters" are certainly going to have to be on their toes if they wish to survive.

Thankfully, there are a number of extras which the girls may use. These are collected in order and remain

with the character until she makes a fatal error. The extra features are obtained by opening certain magical squares and then capturing their contents. The first feature is a glowing ball which reminded me of a gobstopper. Obtaining this sphere turns Mummy's little girl into a hardened tearaway complete with punk hairstyle! With her new image, little Giana finds she can demolish certain types of bricks by headbutting them - this neat trick



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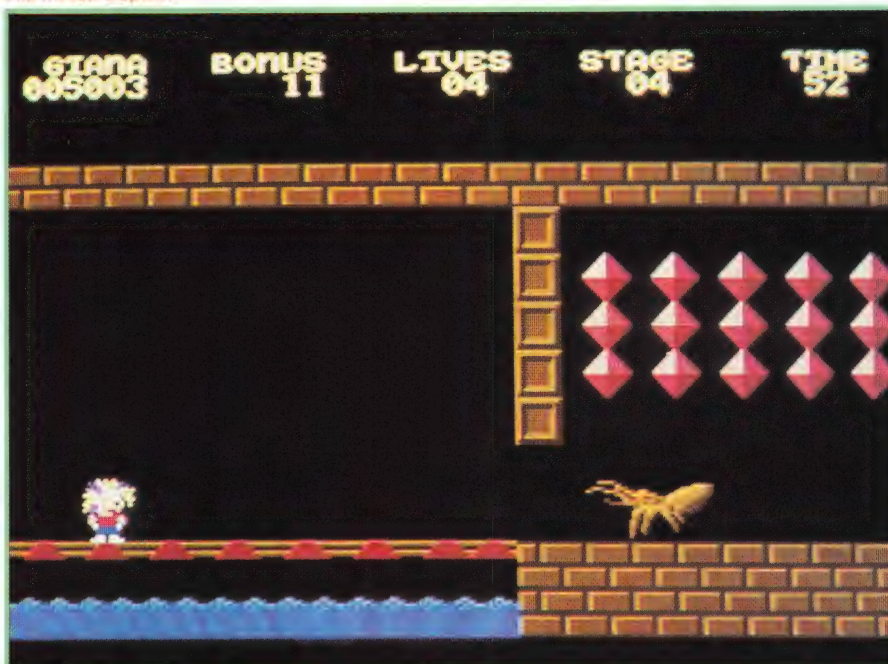
can come in quite handy.

Should the monsters become too much of a handful, little Giana can collect two types of dreambubble. The first can be fired at the oncoming nasties, killing them upon contact. The second type of bubble rebounds, something like those big rubber bouncy balls that every schoolgirl (or boy) once owned. The advantage of these rebounding bubbles can be seen on later levels when bumble-bees are encountered. Strawberries, whilst not seeming to enhance your performance, do actually make the dream-bubbles home in on their target. Other, later additions include water droplets which protect the heroine from fire, and a clock which when activated puts all the nasties to sleep.

Extra lives are obtained by either eating a lollipop or by collecting one hundred bonus diamonds. Points are scored for killing monsters and collecting the diamonds, but the main score is usually accumulated for completing a level, after which a bonus is awarded for any outstanding time left on the clock.

Scattered around the levels are a number of hidden bonuses. These take the form of pits which instead of

At the end of every fourth level there is a big problem to deal with. Here Giana prepares to leap over this mutated spider.

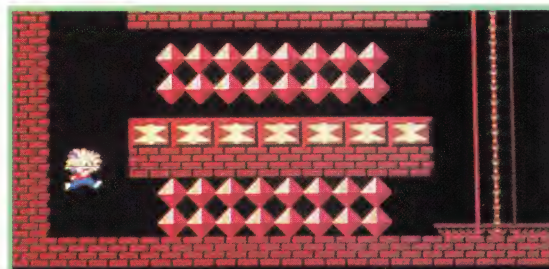


Pure and simple addictiveness. The game is what I would term a good, old-fashioned arcade game - everything in the game, although not brilliant, is good enough except, that is, the game-play, which excels. The music is the best I've heard recently and I can actually play the game with the music on - rare indeed. Joystick controls are simple, well-implemented and effective. One of the best features about this game, though, is the fact that there are several ways of completing each level, depending on how the mood takes you. This is a game that, although a blatant rip-off of the Super Mario Bros., deserves a place in any self-respecting gamer's software cupboard.

MM

bringing sudden death contain a myriad of extra diamonds. Invisible blocks are also dotted around the screens and contact with these will warp the player forward a number of levels, thus saving the more experienced player from having to complete the earlier levels.

"The Great Giana Sisters" was originally found on the Rainbow Arts

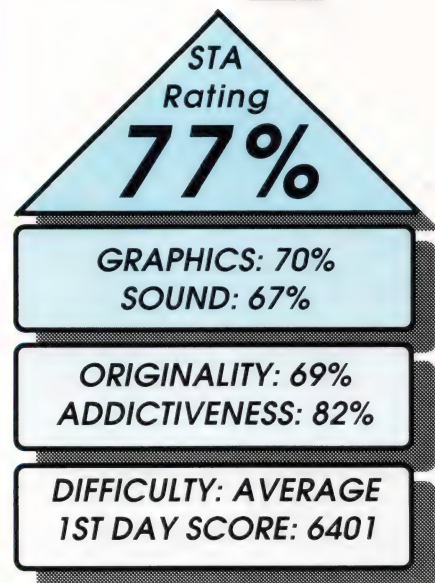


software label but should be released under GO!'s banner. It's nice to see such a well-produced game coming from Europe - and how refreshing to have a female hero!

STA



If you head-butt this invisible block, you will warp straight to level six.



Set amidst five vertically scrolling towers, Mickey must (no Mickey Mouse! - Ed) complete several sub-games to gain access to the evil Ogre King.



Gremlin certainly had a hard task on their hands when they decided to produce a game based around that fifty-year-old institution, Mickey Mouse. Thankfully, however, they have come up with a first-rate cartoon game. Mickey Mouse, the computer game, manages to keep the same Disney-styled graphics that millions have come to know and love. Coupled with a very catchy soundtrack and an immensely playable game, I feel that Gremlin have come up with a first-class game. The program's platform-style feel, together with its various sub-games, help make Mickey Mouse one of my favourites to date.

NC

MICKEY MOUSE

GREMLIN (£19.95)

"Are you ready? 1..2..3..4. Who's the leader of the gang that's made for you and me? M-I-C-K-E-Y, M-O-U-S-E. It was inevitable that during this spate of cartoon licences, Disney's lovable 50-year-old would appear sooner or later."

Catastrophe! Disney castle has been over-run by the King of the Ogres and his cronies. To defeat this monster Mickey must complete a series of sub-games. Once completed, Mickey will gain access to the Ogre King's chamber at the top of the fifth tower.

After Mickey has taken a bow he is ready to proceed. Disney castle is split into five vertically-scrolling

levels are inhabited by the Ogre's colleagues which include: big bad wolves, spectres, dwarf ogres and dragons. To complete the task against these odds would be impossible if it were not for the two weapons Mickey carries: a water pistol which liquidises the dragons and exorcises the ghosts; and a mallet which squashes the small ogres and ghosts. Should the water pistol run out pressing space allows Mickey to change to the mallet. Sending one of the nasties' into the hereafter causes it to disintegrate,

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JOYSTICK

MOUSE

COLOUR

MONO

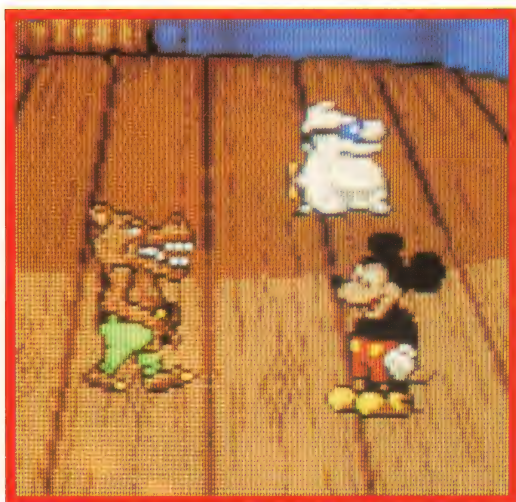
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leaving behind useful items, such as, extra keys, water to refill the pistol, and a red bomb which annihilates any nasties present on screen. But the most useful things Mickey can collect are the special abilities. These are; Slo - which slows the nasties to half speed; Speed (red lightning) - doubles Mickey's speed; Glu - immobilises the nasties; Repulsiveness (ugly face) - monsters do their utmost to avoid you; a shield which prevents any of your water supply being stolen; and, finally, Flight - which stops Mickey falling off the edge of the platforms.

At the beginning of the game Mickey has two keys, which are used to open the doors to the sub-games. Each of these games is a variation of an old classic, such as, Pac-man, Donkey Kong and Space Invaders. The levels are all very tricky and



towers, which are viewed from a side-on angle. Though Mickey can walk all around the screen he must be careful not to fall off the edge, or he will lose valuable energy. Each of these towers consists of a number of levels; these

STA
Rating

78%

GRAPHICS: 86%

SOUND: 62%

ORIGINALITY: 77%
ADDICTIVENESS: 77%

DIFFICULTY: AVE
1ST DAY SCORE: 25500

involve the completion of a certain task. At any time if the going is not good, pressing the Enter key on the numeric pad allows you to abort the attempt.

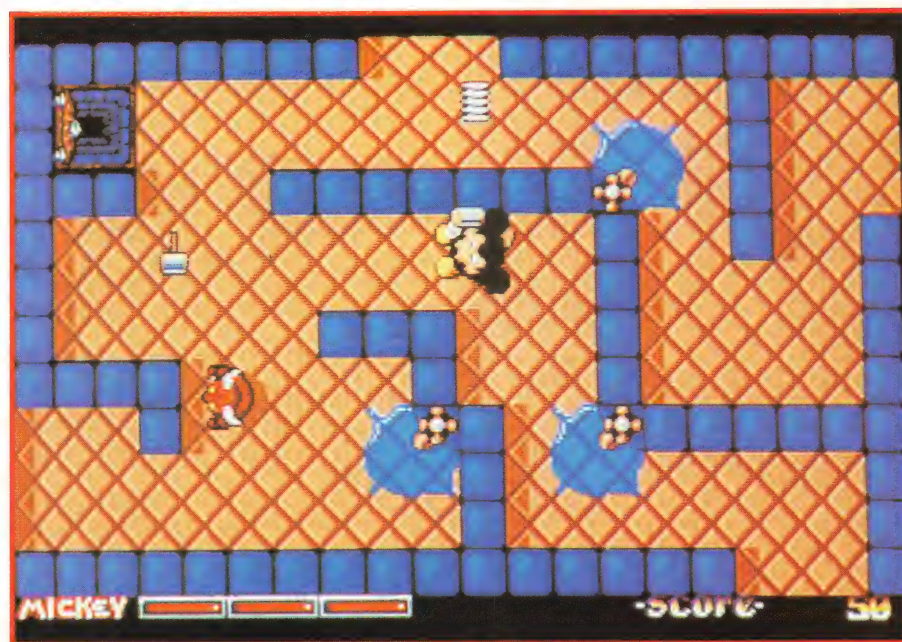
During the Donkey Kong level you must bash corks into a barrier to stop the flow of water. Ogres will try to remove the corks but if you are quick to bang the corks in, you can rush up and bash the ogre; the task is then complete.

Pac Mickey views our hero from above as he runs around searching frantically for some wood, some nails and a hammer, as well as collecting any bonuses that are lying around. Also prowling the corridors are red demons, which can be destroyed with a well-aimed throw of your mallet, but if they touch you they either remove one of your gathered objects or a health point. Once all the objects are collected, a set of stairs must be found to take you back to the tower.

Another sub-game involves Mickey walking along a rickety conveyor belt. Bubbles rising from below knock holes in the belt. Your aim is to stay on the belt by leaping the holes and shooting both the bubbles and any ghosts that come near you - of all the tasks this is the easiest.

The final task is set in a cave: Mickey must turn off four taps that are spinning. Moving platforms carry him around the screen,

In this sub game, Mickey has to collect a hammer, some nails and some wood before exiting.



and he must jump from platform to platform so that he can both avoid the rampant ghosts and turn off the taps.

When Mickey has completed a tower's rooms, he must pass through a portcullis so that he can proceed to the next tower. When all five of the towers are completed, Mickey can ascend to the

top of the final tower - the King Ogre's lair. The King is armed with fireballs and delights in throwing them at

Mickey. These are very difficult to avoid and make it even harder to kill the king. Once the formidable King is defeated, Disney castle is once again in the hands of its rightful owner, Mickey. So now he can invite all his friends, Pluto, Donald, and Goofy, to discuss the possibility of Bambi II...

STA

Now this is a game that I think is worthy of the ST. Nothing spectacular, but everything well above average and it all combines to make an absorbing game. The music is sparse, but catchy; the graphics are so Disney-like it's unnerving; the animation is good and the variation of the different games within a game helps to lift this well above the average ST game. A solid, appealing, well-entertaining game. Highly recommended.

MM

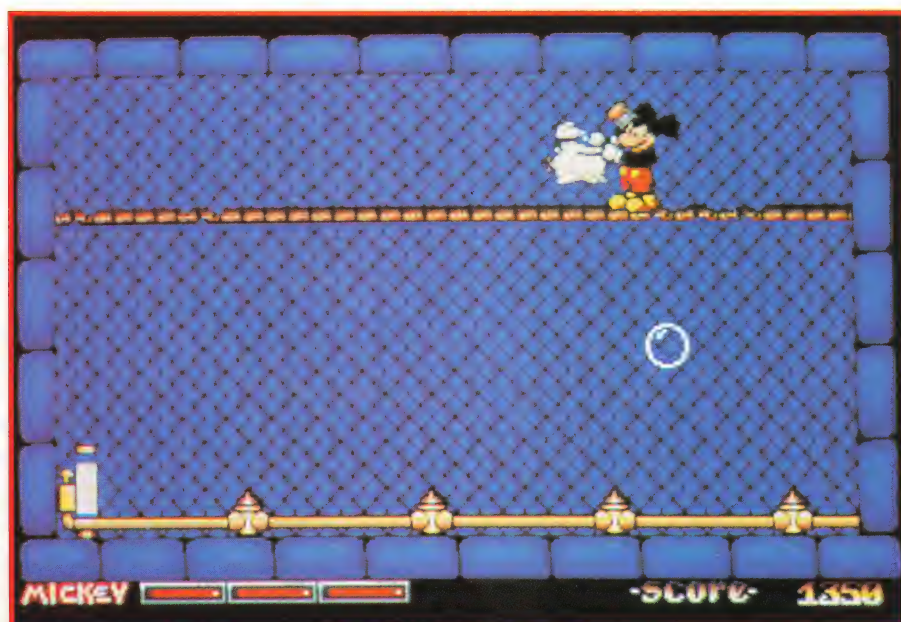


At last! A decent cartoon licence. Gremlin have obviously thought long and hard about how to tackle this difficult licence, and it really shows.

Graphics are excellent, with Mickey looking as if he has just stepped out of one of his cartoons, and the backgrounds are sheer brilliance. But the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" tune grates very quickly.

I have only one worry about this: will its appeal last?. The game is quite repetitive, and it could do with more sub-games. Still, a worthy licence and one that plays almost as well as it looks.

SM



In another sub-game, Mickey does a spot of ghost busting.



"A sidearm is, of course, a holstered gun, but if you wore the weaponry which features in this game you would have more than a slight bulge in your jacket pocket."

SIDE ARMS

GO (£19.95)

With Bionic Commando and, now, Sidearms, Go! look as if they have two sure-fire winners on their hands. Once again, Go! have grabbed another minimal Capcom arcade game, this time a straightforward, horizontal-scrolling, spacey shoot'em-up. Whilst not being particularly challenging, Sidearms is great fun to play and had me whacking madly at my firebutton. Both the graphics and sound are adequate for a game of this type. Whilst not being my first choice in games, Sidearms is a satisfactory shoot'em-up for ardent fans to the genre.

NC

Undoubtedly, the most addictive and playable games were created years ago and so, naturally, these themes often feature strongly in new software. But is revamping and updating these games with new trickery and techniques a justified practice or are we rapidly running out of new ideas?

The 'Go' label was introduced into the Centresoft ranks to produce software which might not suit the Gremlin or U.S. Gold image. But with such a mixed bag of software, which ranges from submarine simulations to arcade shoot'em-ups, Go has yet to find a

niche in the market. Nevertheless, they were entrusted with the task of converting a little-known arcade game called Sidearms. A sidearm is, of course, a holstered gun, but if you wore the weaponry which features in this game you would have more than a

slight bulge in your jacket pocket: A brief animation sequence ensues showing a spacecraft crash-landing on a planet and you can then choose between mouse and

joystick controls.

Equipped with an astonishing arsenal of weaponry, the main character in the game is a military droid who patrols a mountainous planet surface. Choosing the joystick controls, the game-play is very reminiscent of Dropzone or Jetpack. Although the screen scrolls horizontally at a slow and constant pace, the droid can be moved anywhere around the visible screen area at a much greater speed. As the game commences, you are immediately confronted with the first wave of enemy craft. Squadrons of U-shaped craft enter the screen in formation, split up, speed up and spin towards your droid. Initially, you are equipped with a very basic weapon and the most effective tactic is to eliminate as many of the craft as possible before they advance too far. The first squadron of alien craft is not equipped with weaponry, but its part in the game is far from pacificatory. Any craft which manages to break through your defences turns around and continues to advance from behind, and

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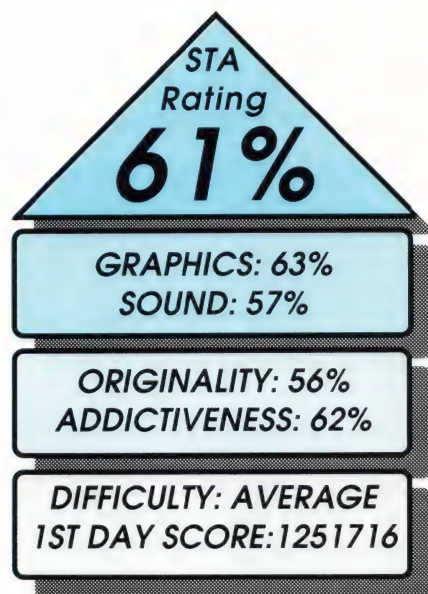
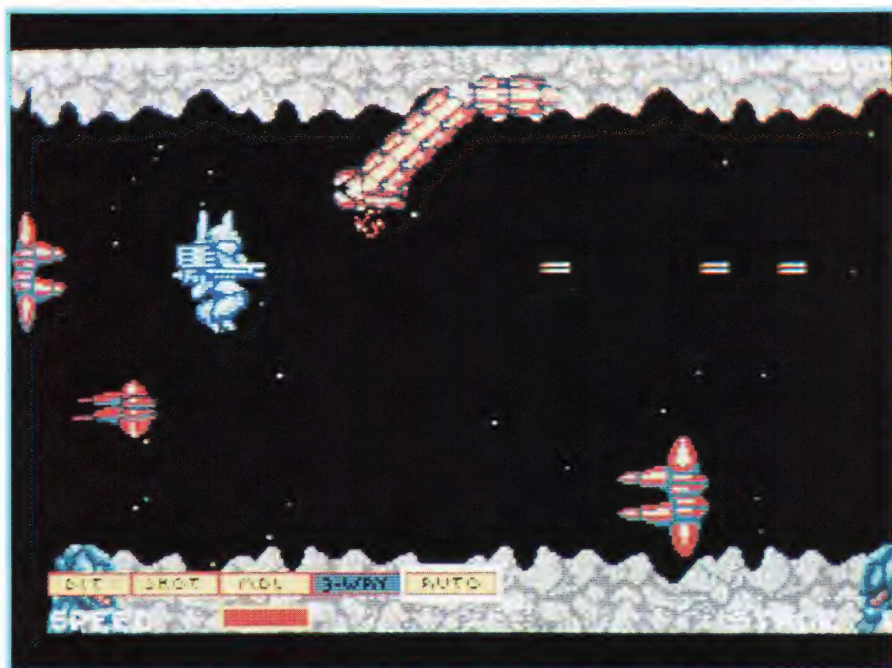


Armed with two deadly rotating balls, it's easy to slice your way through the meanies.

The Go label may not have found its identity and an image yet - but so what? Sidearms contains all the necessary ingredients that make an arcade game entertaining. Although collecting customized weaponry is a relatively new pursuit in arcade games, it is unlikely that Go will win any awards for ingenuity. But you will be entertained by this predictable but enjoyable game.

JS

More meanies to evaporate, but that snake-like Guardian (top right), will take a lot more frying.



the slightest contact with it is fatal.

These somewhat vulnerable and ineffective U-shaped craft are joined by red jets which streak across the screen Kamikazi-style and singly cause more havoc than the droves of slower-moving craft. Flying saucers take up the flank of the attack and fire small but fatal missiles which drift across the screen. A wealth of customized weapons can be gained by

eliminating the enemy craft and each

vessel that is destroyed leaves some form of weaponry enhancer or shield protection. These collectable features are indicated by icons which can be absorbed by manoeuvring the droid over the top. These icons are self-explanatory, such as a three-pronged fork which increases your

What impressed me most in the arcades was the loud, thumping music that accompanied play; it was a real driving tune which seemed to envelope you.

Perhaps, then, due to the feeble sound, this is why this conversion is something of a disappointment to me. All the psychedelia and atmosphere of the original are sadly lacking, leaving just a bog-standard, four-way scrolling shoot'em-up.

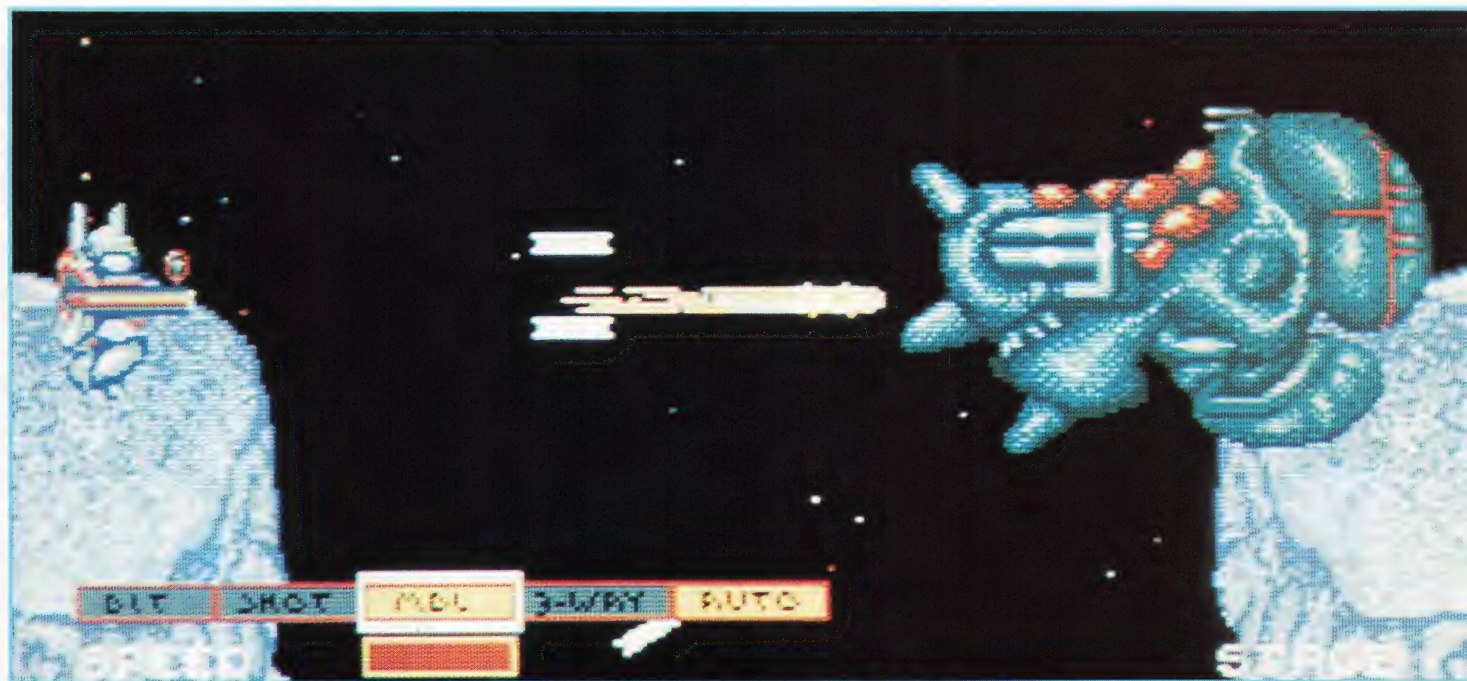
Somehow, this just isn't Side Arms as I know it. I can't put my finger on what is lacking, but it's conspicuous by its absence.

SM

weaponry threefold, or the cannon

which gives you a veritable hand-held rocket launcher which sends a streak of fire wooshing across the screen. But although the rocket is graphically more appealing, it is far less effective than a spray of lighter-gauge ammunition.

A fat alien mothership stands in your path at the end of the level, with the sole task of barring your entrance to the next section of the game, and so it is advisable to try and avoid a confrontation. The alien forces kindly introduce an unpleasant surprise into each level of the game, such as serpents that swirl around and test the effectiveness of your weaponry to the full. Although I could find no documentation to this effect, collecting small disks changes the effectiveness of your weaponry - a sort of alpha and beta weaponry state! **STA**



"He's a good strong lad and if he hasn't put the ball in the net at the end of the day, he'll be as sick as a parrot!"

Programmer, Kevin Toms, set out to prove that a football manager's task goes further than making profound statements 'at the end of the day', and came up with the most surprising success in eight-bit game history!

With emphasis on game strategy and an obvious absence of arcade action, the original Football Manager's widespread appeal baffled its critics. This sequel opens with a series of rather serious and uninteresting screens which deal with team selection. Using the mouse you can shuffle through a long list of F.A. league teams and clicking the mouse button selects the team. This sobriety continues in the second screen in which you must find the most favourable sponsorship for your team. At the start of each season, sponsorship is sought from a number of sources from banks to sportswear manufacturers and, initially, it is wise to accept the first offer of sponsorship as you are widely thought of as an inexperienced and untrustworthy manager.

Your standing as a manager increases with your team's success and so choosing a low skill level on the next screen obviously gives you a better chance of gaining favourable notoriety. Your achievements are automatically accumulated and an average rating is given at the end of the season. But away from the boardroom battles, legal wrangles and financial fracas, you turn your attention to team selection, which is undoubtedly the most important managerial decision. You have a wealth of talent at your disposal and, in this game, they are itinerant players. Therefore, you could have the likes of Linneker up front, Hoddle and Waddle in mid-field and Shilton in goal.

But whether you are an avid football fan or a mere dilettante who is slightly confused by all this Hoddle Waddle twaddle, do not despair as each player has been endowed with skill and fitness specifically for this game, regardless of

The match is on, and for a game of this type, the graphics are quite impressive.



FOOTBALL MANAGER II

PRISM (£19.99)

If you are looking for a football game that you can just load up and have a quick kick about, then Football Manager II is most certainly not the game for you. This is strategy in every sense of the word and should not be purchased for vacuous entertainment. This is the sort of game I can imagine Brian Clough playing on his days off!

JS

how many mentions he may get on Match of the Day. Your ability to analyse their skill and fitness quotas and their strengths in specific positions on the field, is the key to selecting a successful team. Each player's preferred playing position and skill and fitness attributes are displayed with the players' names. With the button pressed, moving the mouse back and forth scrolls the players' names allowing you to view, select and position your team on the field. Your opponents are computer-controlled and as you advance up the league, the teams become progressively stronger.

All the decisions and deliberations are over and now the real pressure is on! The stress is heightened at the realization that, like a real football manager, you have no physical control over the match and you must watch helplessly and pray that you have made the right decisions. The animated match simulation shows your team responding and playing in accordance with your tactics and you can assess each players' performance for future reference. Skills to watch for are in individual player's ability to pass accurately, mark and tackle effectively and, of course, score. Closer scrutiny can be gained with slow-motion action-replays and this analysis can be used to change the training programme after the match.

Naturally, the key players in your

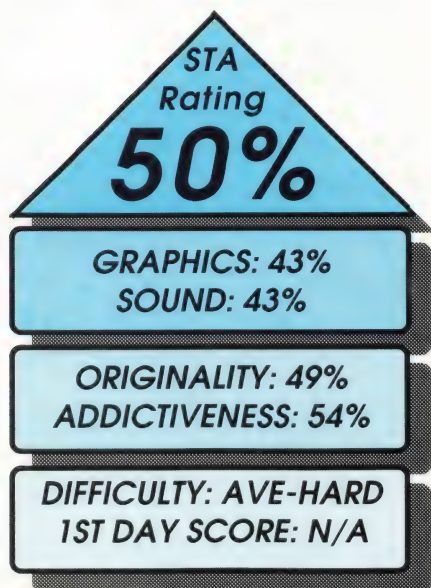
winning side are valuable commodities and can be sold for millions. Indeed, the financial aspects of management are also a major concern in this game, including the takings on the turnstiles and marketing the players.

STA

Many years ago, Kevin Toms produced Football Manager, a soccer strategy game which slowly but surely became one of the biggest selling computer games ever! Now, at long last, Kevin has written the long-awaited sequel to his best seller - Football Manager 2!

I must admit I was looking forward to FM2, having spent many hours playing its predecessor. I was, however, rather disappointed with this latest release. Sure enough, the extra features, enhanced graphics and new controls are all improvements, but hidden behind all the razzamatazz, FM2 is essentially the same game. FM2 is undoubtedly a worthwhile effort but, sadly, still lacks that certain "je ne sais quoi".

NC



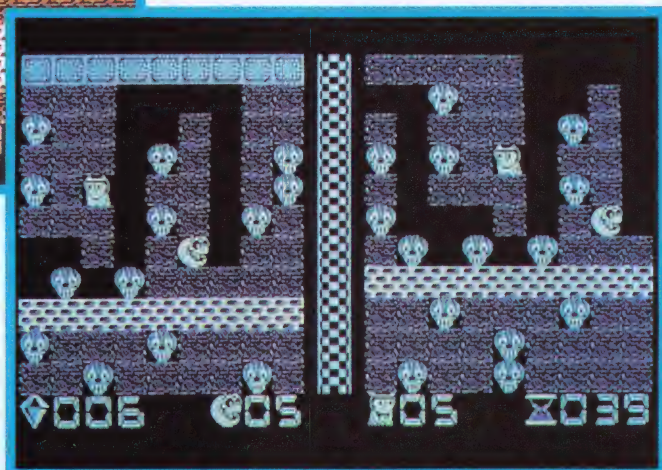
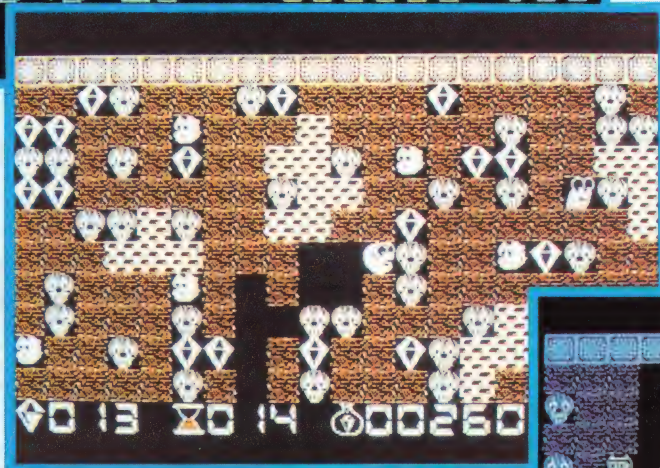
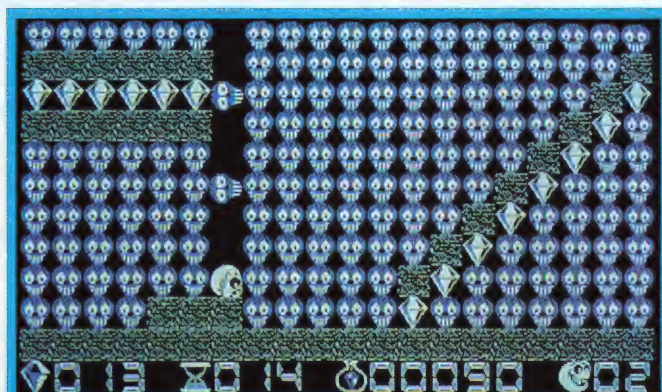
SKULLDIGGERY

Skulldiggery caverns are full of treasure and deadly hazards too!

You take the part of a bouncy cave mite with a strange appetite for treasure.

There's plenty about, but watch out for those tumbling skulls, the crazy ghosts and the vicious bats.

Every one of the 100 Skulldiggery caverns is packed full of challenges; creatures to dodge, treasure to collect and mysterious puzzles to solve. It runs on any 520 or 1040ST in colour or mono using one or two joysticks or keys. You can play by yourself or with a fellow cave mite in the amazing simultaneous two-player mode: Both players on-screen and in the same cave at the same time! Co-operate or compete, the choice is yours!



Skulldiggery was designed and written by the team who bring you ST Action every month.

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**THE
OFFICIAL
VERSION**

"The definition of the word Phantasm is: 'A ghost or spectre'. But, 'Doppelganger' might have been a more relevant title because, in my opinion, it is a ghostly counterpart to the Tau Ceti series of games!"

PHANTASM

EXOCET (£19.95)

The mission briefing is exactly that - brief; and the scenario describes how you are a destitute outcast who runs from town to town trying to keep one step ahead of the omnipresent Poll Tax collector. The scenario appears to have little bearing on the game and you are whisked away to a distant moon to pilot a fighting craft called Pegasus. Your objective is to locate and destroy eight reconstitution sites, which are randomly placed around the planet. These factories take the rusting hulks of spacecraft and manufacture new fighting machines out of the undamaged parts.

After selecting one of four levels of difficulty, the next screen shows a globe segmented into grids, and using the mouse you can select a particular area to begin the mission. The game can run at real-time and you are asked to enter the time on a twenty-four-hour clock when you start the game. The screen shuffles to reveal Pegasus on a launching pad and with a kaleidoscope of colours, you are transported on to the planet surface. The playing area is darker nearer the poles of the planet which makes enemy identification practically impossible. Pushing the joystick forwards sends Pegasus trundling across the terrain and left and right movements enable you to pan the area and change direction. The terrain is covered with large landmarks and a message window enables you to identify the object which is nearest to Pegasus' sensors. Radar, cooling towers and factory buildings can be destroyed with your lasers, which are activated by centering a set of weaponry sights over the target and

pressing the firebutton.

The enemy ardently protect their re-constitution plants and retaliate with a myriad of interception craft. These variform vessels can be concealed behind landmarks or hover menacingly above the terrain. Pegasus

is equipped with a radar that pinpoints all landmarks and enemy craft, although it does not determine which is which. More interceptor forces take off and fly towards you emitting their lasers and weakening your shield protection. Shield strength, weaponry and fuel status must be monitored closely, as supplies are limited and as they diminish, sanctuary must be sought in one of the docking

stations on the planet surface.

Good grief! I thought this was the ghost of that old toady, Tau Ceti, coming back to haunt me! It has all the features that made the aforementioned so bad; same sluggish controls, same bland graphics.

I dare say that if this sort of thing is your cup of tea you'll enjoy it, but I could see nothing to inspire me. The gameplay is very repetitive and consists, for the main part, of skimming around a barren landscape shooting flying saucers and the like. Hardly riveting stuff.

SM

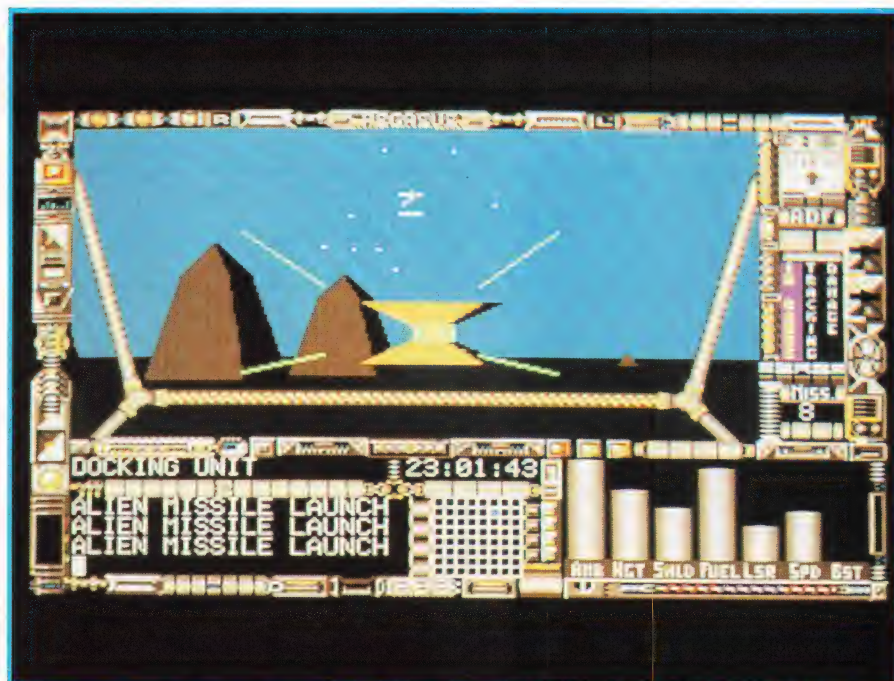
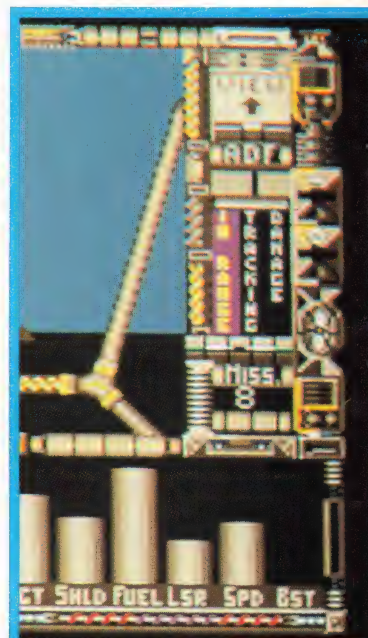
STA
Rating
60%

GRAPHICS: 61%
SOUND: 53%

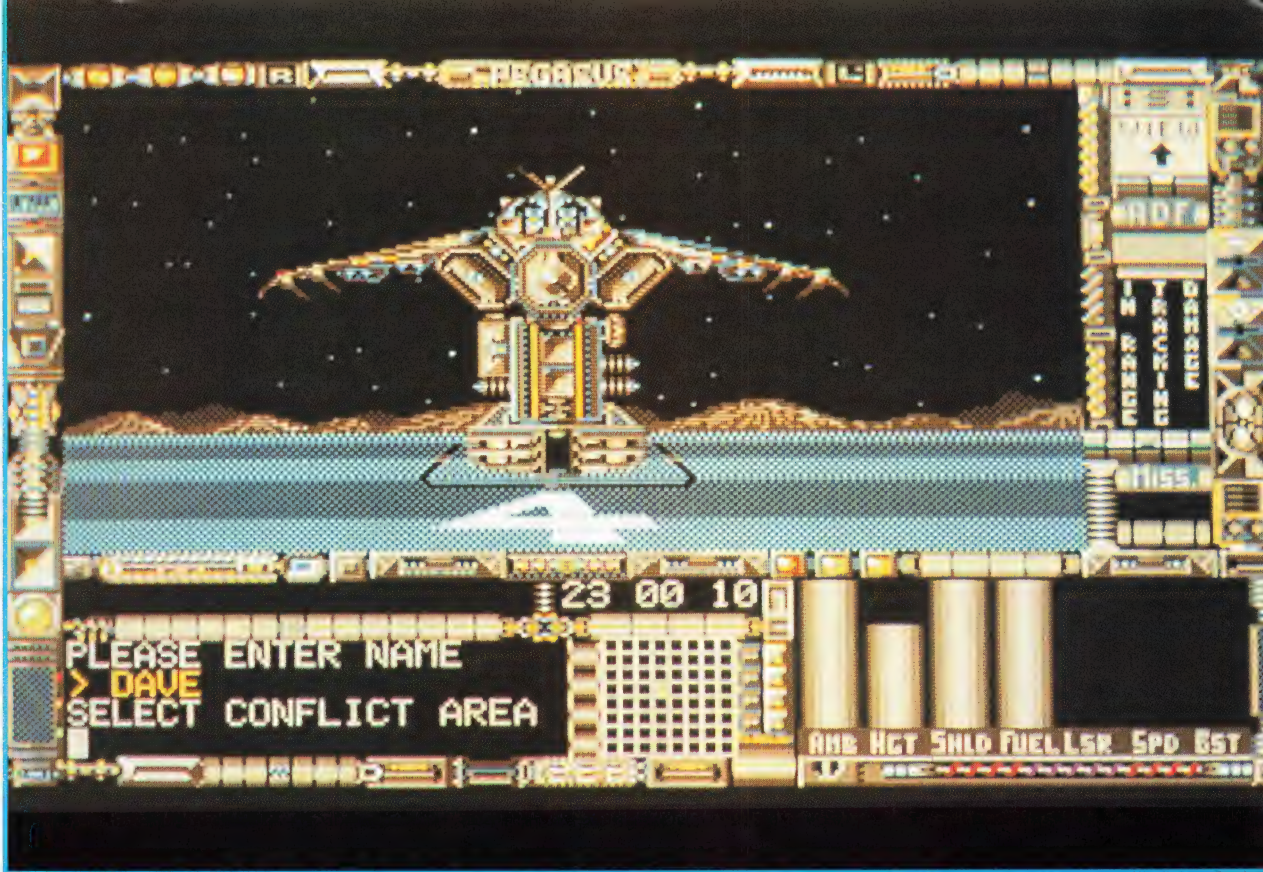
ORIGINALITY: 63%
ADDICTIVENESS: 61%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 22000

Some protection can be afforded with anti-missile blasters, which are activated by pressing the 'A' key, while the 'B' key can inject a burst of speed to get you out of dangerous situations. Pegasus has the ability to leave the planet surface and a rapid change in altitude can be achieved with the 'H' key, while pressing the 'G' returns you to the planet surface. The



best tactics are to attack the enemy craft as soon as they come into view and use the landmarks as cover when you are under attack. Of course, your main objective is to put the factories out of action and so relying on the descriptions from the ship's computer, you must move within firing distance of the target, aim and fire continuously but economically. When all eight reconstitution plants have been destroyed on the first level, you must locate your docking area for refuelling and weaponry replenish-

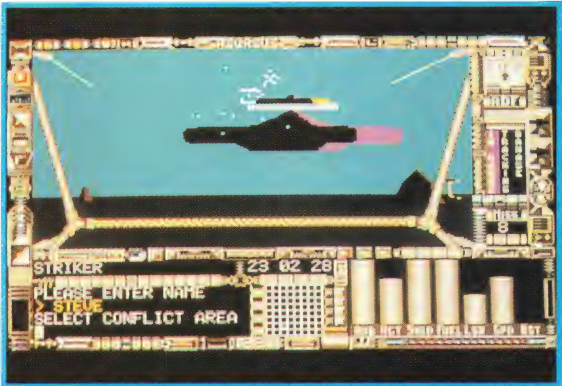


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ment ready for the next level. The ensuing levels show the importance of such an elaborate instrumentation console and constant refer-

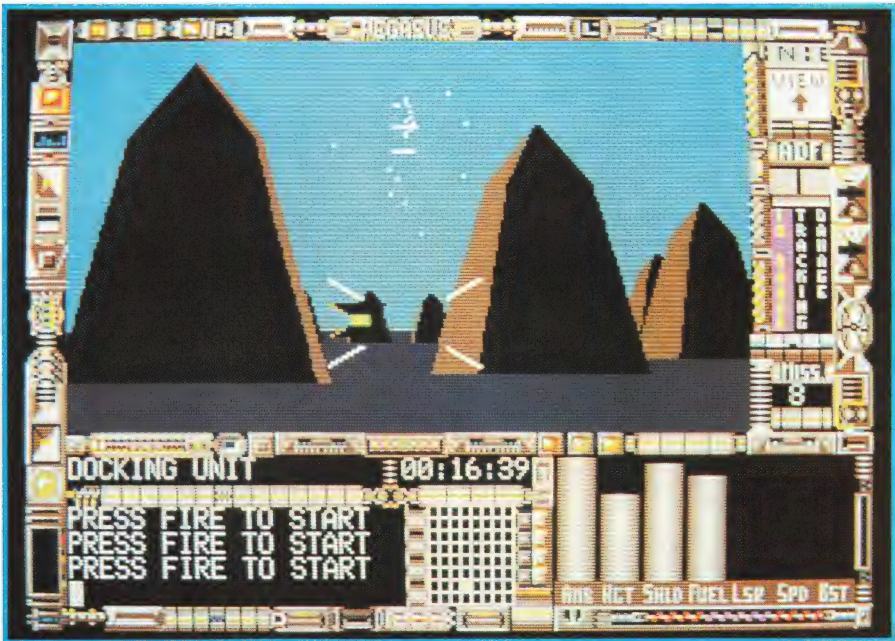
ence to the fuel and weaponry status is imperative. Alien presence and intelligence increases considerably, but the game becomes easier as you gain experience. Although Pegasus is endowed with a limited supply of missiles, crucial supplies can be replenished by docking in an enemy fuel dump. Without weaponry, you soon fall prey to the alien interceptors and so before supplies diminish completely, the search for an enemy weaponry dump must take precedence. As soon as the on-board computer identifies a weaponry dump, you must direct Pegasus

towards it, monitor your speed and



collide with it at a snail's pace. The benefits of this collision are twofold as your supply of weapons is replenished and repairs are made to Pegasus's instrumentation.

STA



Those mountain ranges could be your best form of defence.

Phantasm is certainly very similar to the Tau Ceti games, but it is also immeasurably superior as Exocet have created a game with a successful combination of battle entertainment and strategy. However, one criticism is that, apart from a stepped-up alien presence, the terrains and backdrops are the same in every level. Like most games which keep your attention for a respectable length of time, Phantasm does not ooze immediate appeal and it has to be played to be appreciated.

JS

"In space, nobody can hear you scream..." - Ridley Scott's film, Alien, shocked cinema goers everywhere. Drawing heavily on the film's original theme, Sega's Alien Syndrome has been converted for the ST by ACE software. The net result is a game oozing with atmosphere, guts and gore!"

ALIEN SYNDROME

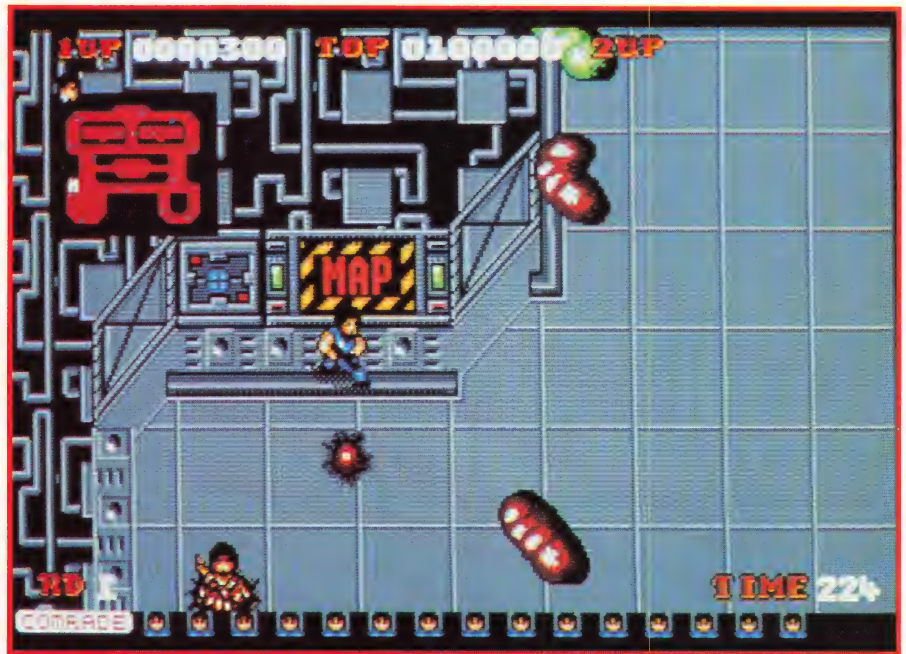
ACE (£19.95)

An experimental genetic laboratory floats harmlessly somewhere deep in the outer reaches of space. Everything seems to be going well, perhaps too well. Until, a catastrophic accident causes the station to become overrun by the most hideous organic mutations. Feeding on human flesh, these marauding monsters have already captured the ship's scientists. The powers governing the space station have called in Ricky and Mary, veteran alien exterminators.

You must take on the role of either Ricky or Mary. As the twentieth century's answer to Rentokil, you must board the unfortunate station, rescue the captured scientists and escape before a time-bomb blows both the ship and the mutant creatures on board it to kingdom come!

Whilst loading, the game displays two very nicely drawn title screens. The first while only showing the game logo, does accompany itself with a strange sounding pronunciation of the title - we likened it to the sound of Greg's stomach after he had eaten a hot curry! The second screen not only credited the authors but also depicted a gruesome, slimey alien in full distasteful colour. After swapping disks, I proceeded to confirm my control options with the game. Player one has the right to choose whether to play the part of Ricky or Mary, while player two, should you decide to team up, has to become the remaining character. Having decided who's who, I anxiously waited to board the first space station.

Upon arrival I was greeted with the message, "The time bomb has been set!". Glancing at the clock, I noticed I only had two-hundred-and-forty seconds to rescue the scientists, kill the gross mother-creature and leave the station. Not pausing for a second longer, I started my search for ship's crew. Running in an easterly direction I soon located a cocooned scientist. Waving pathetically from his jelly-like confinement, the prisoner summoned me to his aid. There are ten scientists to collect, each yielding a bonus of one hundred points times the



In search of trapped crew members, Ricky fights his way through the onslaught of car-sized maggots -BLEAURGH!!

number of prisoners you have already collected.

Not only does a player have to rescue his fellow humans, but he must also remain constantly aware of the alien

presence on board. The aliens encountered on level one reminded me of mutant caterpillars. Not only are these grotesque creatures deadly upon contact but they also tend to spit lumps of themselves at you, intent on your swift demise. Frantically, I fired in their direction, being rewarded with a beautiful "splat" sound and the alien turning into mushy pea soup.

Dotted around the complex's walls are a number of useful compartments. These come in three separate forms. A door with a question

mark will yield a bonus of between one and four hundred. A door with a blue circle on it will assign a sentry droid to you. This handy little chap takes up the rear destroying any aliens that decide to approach

from behind; don't, however, rely on him too much as he's a lousy shot! Finally, doors marked with letters contain weapons. Fireballs, flame-throwers, lasers and bombs, all are useful but some are more effective against different aliens than others. A detailed plan of the ship can also be called up by looking at one of the video screens marked "map". Not only does this facility show a blue-print of the station but it also displays the location of any remaining scientists.

The gameplay is divided into two separate sections. The first part involves

Yuck, at last a tasteful game that still manages to ooze blood and guts. Alien Syndrome is basically a Gauntlet clone, but while other games trying to compete with U.S. Gold's masterpiece will fail miserably, I think Ace's Alien Syndrome will become a best-seller. With very colourful graphics and atmospheric sonics, Alien Syndrome is a very addictive game, albeit a little tough. My single criticism is the scrolling: it may be a little jerky but that doesn't really show when you are in the thick of the action. I found the screen appeared slowly giving the aliens an unfair advantage. Still, if you enjoy a good blast a la Gauntlet, then Alien Syndrome is great!

NC

STA
Rating

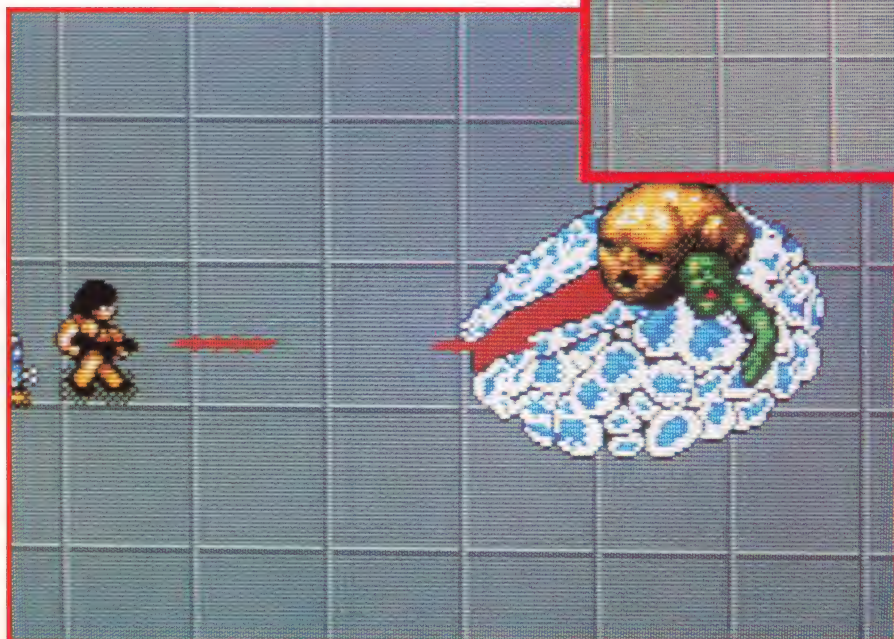
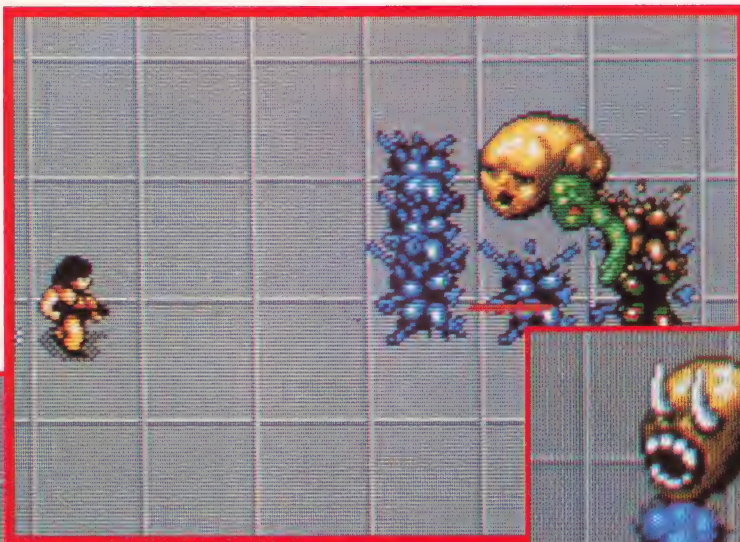
69%

GRAPHICS: 62%
SOUND: 57%

ORIGINALITY: 64%
ADDICTIVENESS: 76%

DIFFICULTY: AVE-HARD
1ST DAY SCORE: 33733

To complete level one, you must destroy this enormous Alien (below). Your weapon must hit the Alien in the red area, where it hurts, this causes it to flash. After several direct hits it will explode (right) releasing the green hugger, which heads straight for you. This leaves a real nasty piece of work, who also needs multiple hits (inset right).



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| JOYSTICK | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| MOUSE | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| COLOUR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| MONO | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 520ST | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1040ST | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

As arcade conversions go, this is one of the better efforts. It's just a pity that such a good conversion was wasted on a barely average game.

Fans of the original should be more than satisfied with this. The only fault being the "push" scrolling, which led, quite often, to my character running straight into an alien.

Ace, it seems, are going to be a force to be reckoned with when it comes to conversions. If they can get hold of a real blockbuster licence and convert it as well as this, we should have a real treat to look forward to.

SM

Averageness abounds! The game is of the Gauntlet - Eagle's Nest genre but, although quite addictive in the short term, suffers from rather poor scrolling, strictly average animation and an abundance of overgrown, multi-coloured maggots. The game is really about learning a set number of moves, and once these are discovered, you live on into the next level. However, the game tends to suffer because you can learn the moves just that little bit too easily. Although most games are like this these days, some are acceptable, some are not. This one teeters precariously on the edge. The two-player option does little to enhance things. I would save my money and buy something with a little more class.

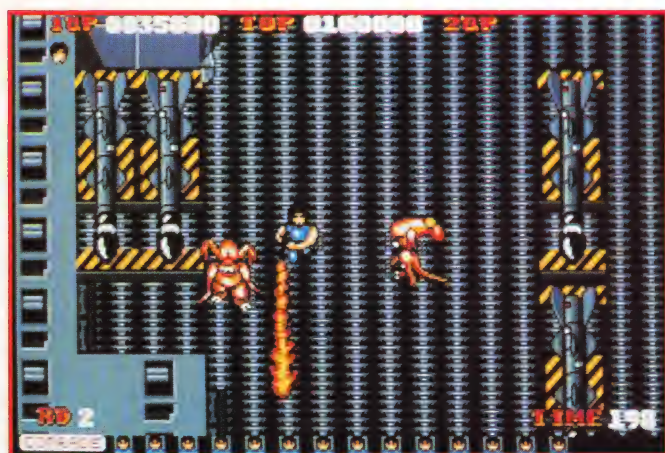
MM

the collection of all the scientists; only after the final human has been rescued does the computer announce: "Proceed to the exit!". Upon entering the exit the second section begins. The player will find himself face to face with the mother-creature. Only after several direct hits to the creature's more vulnerable regions will the monster die. Beware, however, of the thing splitting into separate sections. Only after defeating the ugly beast can a player run towards the

exit and to the next level.

Each new level provides new, more disgusting, aliens than the last and an even more bizarre mother-creature. Alien Syndrome has wonderfully hideous graphics and chillingly atmospheric sound effects. This "Gauntlet"-type game proves that despite using an already tried and tested game idea, it is still possible to produce an original game.

STA



Rainbird's Corruption offers the same high-quality pull-down graphics that we have come to expect from their fiendish adventures.



Does anybody remember those 1930's and 40's thrillers with murders, frame-ups and suspicious men in long raincoats and hats? That's the strong impression I get from this game, even though it's set in present-day yuppie-land. I half expected one of the pictures to show Humphrey Bogart. I enjoyed this game, and the addition of the cassette and filofax inserts are a nice touch.

The bit I didn't enjoy all that much was the command parser. At times it didn't seem to be as clever as I would have expected from a game into which so much thought has gone.

This game is supposed to be for the ardent adventure game player and, as such, is very difficult. I can vouch for that - who would have thought 'she' would have attempted to kill me!

SK

"Throwing caution to the winds, ST Action hired a Porsche and a Saville Row suit for its ace reporter and sent him to investigate stories of 'corruption' in London's Stock Market."

CORRUPTION

RAINBIRD (£24.95)

Imagine you worked in the golden centre of London's city world and a friend let slip that his business was about to be awarded a large government contract. What would you do? Not so long ago you would have been

considered mad if you didn't rush to buy as many shares as you could and make a killing when the news became public. Times have changed, however, and now such actions are known as 'insider dealing' and deemed illegal. This is why no-one in the City would now dream of making himself a million by taking advantage of such knowledge. Would they? The trouble is, someone has and they are going to make sure that it's not them who gets caught holding the baby.

Having arrived in your office for your first day as a newly-created partner, you quickly realise that things are not quite as they should be. Before it's even time to meet your glamorous wife for a celebration lunch, your world begins to fall apart. Rumours have

spread of a fraud investigation and your new partner has disappeared from his office. Only his dizzy blonde secretary is left and she can't even solve the problem of which fingernail she should paint next. Perhaps you

should brave the busy traffic which roars past the office and take a walk in the park to clear your head? Luckily, you still don't realise that all you have heard so far is the 'good' news!

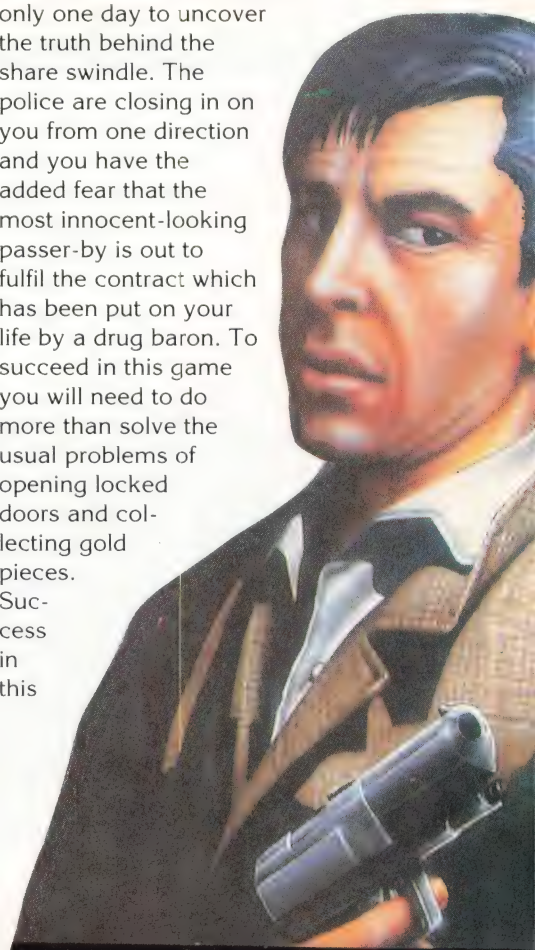
Out there in

London's East End, someone is waiting to give you a free course in underwater hang-gliding - with a concrete parachute. Your wife is also waiting to tell you that she is madly in love, and it's not with you.

Having consistently featured amongst the top rank of British adventure writers, Magnetic Scrolls have now returned with a new slant to their popular brand of first-class graphics and cunning text puzzles. Leaving behind the world of goblins and dragons, this adventure takes you

to the world of high finance and betrayal - and sticks you in the frame for a swindle you did not commit. With the clock constantly showing the time ticking away, you have only one day to uncover the truth behind the share swindle. The police are closing in on you from one direction and you have the added fear that the most innocent-looking passer-by is out to fulfil the contract which has been put on your life by a drug baron. To succeed in this game you will need to do more than solve the usual problems of opening locked doors and collecting gold pieces. Success in this

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| 520ST | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 1040ST | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



adventure means asking the right questions of the right people to enable you to uncover all the pieces of the puzzle. As the other players in this plot move through their daily routine, it will be useful to know when and where they go for lunch. Then, at least, is one time when you could slip back from El Vinos for a quick search of their desks.

The game packaging contains a cassette which holds some suitable 'Outrun'-type music, which no doubt you can play while bombing down the motorway to your yuppie cottage in the country. At an appropriate point in the game you will be prompted to play the tape and you will be surprised at the unexpected additions to the musical contents. The game's instructions and hint sheets are cleverly printed on filofax insert pages, which serves the dual purpose of being convenient for storage and giving a logical reason for making some additions which give extra hints. Pages



include a selection from a 'Good Restaurant Guide', and a 'Gamblers Casino Companion' explaining the rules of Baccarat and Blackjack. The further addition of used memo sheets enables you to have a short glimpse into the private world of our hero, and from these pages clues are to be found which will help you plan your moves in the hectic day ahead.

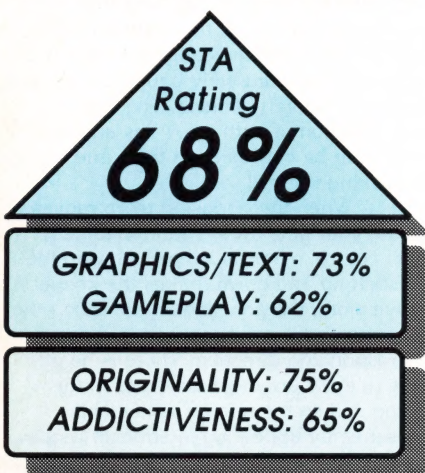
The usual pull-down menus of the scroll's games are again included, with the additional novelty that they are also in the format of filofax pages. The text size can be altered to suit both monitor and TV users. There is, however, no RAM SAVE option which can be so convenient for ST users.

All Magnetic Scroll games have been rightly praised for their high-quality graphic screens. These are

cunningly created in such a way that they are medium-resolution screens with all the colours normally found only on the low-resolution mode. It has been rightly said that the graphics used in the Scroll's first game (The Pawn) did more to launch the Atari ST than any other item of software. A different artist has been used for Corruption's screens and, yet again, a very high standard has been achieved.

After the success of Jinxster, the company decided to increase the difficulty level of their games, and accordingly this game is advertised as suitable for 'Hardened Adventurers'. Feeling lucky?

STA



Pick your friends wisely or you'll be in need of more than a bottle of Aspirin to cure your headaches.

Any Scroll's game is to be welcomed, as they all contain many hours of sophisticated game-play. I found the graphics not to be as breathtaking as their predecessors', but that is purely a matter of personal taste and not a criticism of the workmanship. The game designers set themselves a difficult task by moving from the usual GET OBJECT, USE OBJECT style of game. Any game which hinges around the idea of obtaining information by asking questions of the other characters, must ensure that it has a very clever command parser or it is not going to work. In this case they have done a pretty fair job, but there are occasions when the parser seems dimmer than it used to be. The game is tricky and I'm sure that you will have to succumb to the lure of your filofax hint sheet eventually.

AM

BEARDSLEY'S SOCCER

GRANDSLAM (£19.95)

"Could this be the best peice of soccer action this side of Match of the Day?"

Before Grandslam had a chance to release Peter Beardsley's International Football, England had suffered a crushing defeat at the clogs of the mighty Dutch. But as the subdued 'experts' said: 'If only the ball had gone in more often it would have made all the difference.' Undoubtedly!

As a result of the drunken and cretinous English hooligans' behaviour in Germany, this may be the nearest we shall get to playing in Europe again! Like the tournament in question, this game starts with the qualifying rounds and by the process of elimination, two teams are left to compete in the final. But before you can

Every original game has its share of spin-offs, and Commodore's "International Soccer" proved to be no exception. Back in issue two we took a look at Microdeal's rather disappointing version of "International Soccer". Now Grandslam have decided to join in the sporting spirit with their very own "Peter Beardsley's International Football". This latest soccer clone has to be the most playable to date. After learning how to control my squad I soon found myself having closely fought games against the computer; I even managed to win sometimes! "Peter Beardsley's International Football" is by far the best soccer game currently available on the ST.

NC

even kick the ball, preliminary decisions must be made to select two groups of four teams from a list of international contenders and three qualifying matches must be played, while the computer simulates the results from the other games. Success in these three games means that your team qualifies for the knockout semi-final stage.

Whether you are playing against the computer or an opponent, team selection and match duration is chosen by moving a 'highlight' down the lists of teams and times with the joystick and pressing the firebutton confirms the selection. You have the choice of playing for 5, 10, 15 or 20 minutes and the chosen time applies for the entire tournament. Those computer-simulated results of the teams who are not featuring in the game appear on screen just before kick-off. The players automatically take position on the pitch and the decision on which team is to kick off has already been made.

There are no sound effects, such as, the punt of the ball, the referee's whistle and crowd noises, in this game. Instead, we are "treated" to a constant medley of the sort of football songs that can be slurred between swigs of export lager on the ferries. Who could forget the poetic, 'Here we go - here we go - here we go'? Buy this game and you'll never forget it! Except for their respective team colours, the players in both teams all look like Pete Beardsley, although thankfully, the Pete in possession of the ball is immediately recognizable by a large arrow pointing at his head. Correspondingly, the opposing Pete who is nearest the ball also sports a rather obtrusive arrow so that you know which man in your team is in play.

STA
Rating

52%

GRAPHICS: 56%

SOUND: 38%

ORIGINALITY: 44%

ADDICTIVENESS: 54%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE
1ST DAY SCORE: N/A

If you gain possession, the ball remains close to the player's feet and he can be moved in any of the eight joystick directions. Erratic joystick movements are required to 'dribble' the ball through the defending team and the most favourable tactic is to keep the ball for as long as possible, as passing is a bit of a hit-and-miss affair in this game. Pressing and releasing the firebutton causes the player to kick the ball and the power of the shot is regulated by the length of time that you maintain pressure on the firebutton. The ball travels in the direction that the player is facing, but accurately gauging distances proves to be very difficult. The distance and direction of both throw-ins and goal-kicks can be controlled in the same fashion as kicking the ball.

When the opposing team moves within your goal area, you immediately gain control over the keeper. Moving the joystick up and down makes the keeper move along the goal line and pressing the firebutton causes him to dive in the corresponding direction. There is no off-side rule nor are there any fouls in this game and so the referee justifies his presence by appearing in an inset window to blow his silent whistle every time the ball goes out of play, while a commentator appears to give his tacit comment when a goal is scored.

Playing the computer-controlled side in these football games could be likened to pitting a bunch of geriatrics against a team of Peles and Cruyffs, and so a better balanced and more enjoyable game can be gained with two player participation. However, the controls are often inaccurate and woolly, which is frustrating in the heat of the action. Additionally, in cramming players of this size and number into a relatively small playing area, Grandslam have left little room to manoeuvre in the game. Nevertheless, soccer is one of the best themes for two-player participation and basing the game around a knockout tournament is a real incentive.

JS





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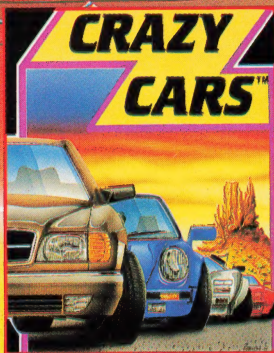
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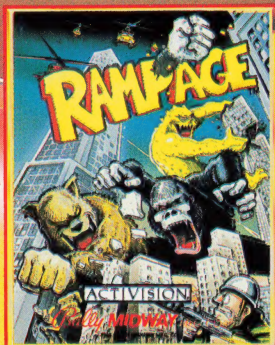
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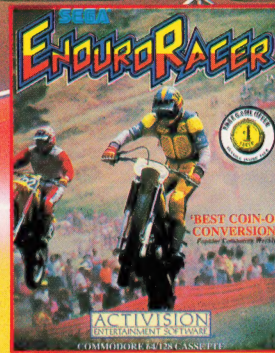
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The evil Zark and his horrible sprites have moved in to eliminate the spectrum and render all landscapes drab and grey. So jump in your transporter and with the help of your faithful servant Catelite restore Wizworld to its former glory. Collect icons for special effects as you manoeuvre to shake off the alien forces. Stunning graphics create the mood for a thrilling and compulsive game with hordes of hidden features and extra controls.

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